

## Holiness, Sex, and Death in the Garden of Eden

The notion that the Garden of Eden is holy is not new. *Jubilees*, for example, requires Adam and his wife to wait forty and eighty days, respectively, to enter the plantation because they are apparently impure like new born children and the garden is “more holy than any land” (3,12)<sup>(1)</sup>. Though *Jubilees*’ rationalization is not what we might call “scientific”, the book may not be misguided in its basic perception about the garden’s sanctity. Some modern scholars with good reason have affirmed this notion. H. Gunkel, says: “Hier [in Gen 2–3] wird von einem solchen [Park], besonders heiligen Park gesprochen”<sup>(2)</sup>. G. von Rad more specifically says that, in view of divine control of the area: “versteht die Erzählung diesen Baumgarten deutlich als einen *heiligen* Bezirk, die Gegenwart der Gottheit umschließend und deshalb von Keruben bewacht”<sup>(3)</sup>. G. Wenham has provided the most detailed argument for this view in a paper recently republished in a collection of seminal papers on Genesis 1–11<sup>(4)</sup>.

Yet, despite strong arguments, some evidence contradicts this conclusion. The human pair appears to be sexually capable and active in the garden before eating the fruit and might even suffer

<sup>(1)</sup> For a discussion of this and a similar view of Syriac Christianity’s Ephrem, see G. ANDERSON, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden”, *HTR* 82 (1989) 129-131, 142-146.

<sup>(2)</sup> H. GUNKEL, *Genesis* (Göttingen 81969) 7.

<sup>(3)</sup> G. VON RAD, *Das erste Buch Mose, Genesis 1–25* (ATD 2/3; Göttingen 1952) 62 (von Rad’s emphasis).

<sup>(4)</sup> “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story”, “*I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*”: *Ancient Near Eastern and Literary Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (ed. R.S. HESS–D.T. TSUMURA) (SBTS 4; Winona Lake, IN 1994) 399-404; originally published in the *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Division A: The Period of the Bible; Jerusalem 1986) 19-25. The same conclusion appears in D.P. WRIGHT, “Unclean and Clean (OT)”, *ABD* VI, 739s. Cf. Gese’s comment in note 24, below.

death there naturally were they to avoid transgression. Products of these human capabilities and potentialities — sexual discharges (e. g., of semen and of menstrual and lochial blood) and human corpses — are impure<sup>(5)</sup>. And these, as can be surmised from various traditions in the Bible, even in J (see part III, below) to which Genesis 2,4b–3,24 basically belongs<sup>(6)</sup>, are a threat to holiness<sup>(7)</sup>.

This study seeks to explain this discrepancy. It first reviews evidence for the garden's holiness and then for the presence of impurity there. The review focuses on the present contours of the text since it is there that the conflict exists. The purpose of the survey is to set out the inconsistency distinctly by clarifying and augmenting the evidence for both arguments and to show thereby that a solution cannot be achieved by dismissing one or the other side of the contradiction. The last section of the study offers an explanation based on historical-critical perspectives.

### I. The Garden's Holiness

Genesis 2–3 does not expressly call the garden holy. It does not use antonyms for holiness which imply their opposite. It does not mention the associated concepts of purity and impurity. And it does not feature principal phenomena associated with holy places, such as sacrifice. The argument for the garden's holiness is circumstantial, being dependent upon a number of less prominent correspondences with features of holy places.

<sup>(5)</sup> See note 59, below, and WRIGHT, "Unclean and Clean", 729-741; id., "Discharge", *ABD* II, 204-207.

<sup>(6)</sup> This study recognizes the distinction between the J and P materials. Use of these "documentary" denominations, however, does not assume any particular dating or development of these materials. It is hoped thereby that the conclusions here will be amenable to various specific theories of the development of the Pentateuch.

<sup>(7)</sup> On the exclusion of impurity from the holy sphere, see Exod 19,10-16; Lev 7,19-21; 12,4; 21,1-4.10-12; 22,3-9; Num 5,1-4; 6,8-12; 9,6-13; 18,11.13; Deut 12,15.22; 15,22; 26,14; 1 Sam 16,5; 20,26; 21,5-7; 2 Kgs 11,15; Isa 52,1; Ezek 43,7-9; 44,25; 2 Chr 26,20. Only in controlled *cultic* situations, particularly when holy items are being used to remove impurity, can impurity come into contact with what is holy (e. g., the purgation offering which is holy [Lev 6,18] but whose function is to remove impurity [Lev 8,15; Ezek 43,20-23; 45,18-19] and which thereby becomes impure [Lev 16,27-28]).

Primary evidence for the garden's sanctity is the presence of the deity. This, from the native Israelite point of view, is the chief determinant of holiness<sup>(8)</sup>. The deity, for example, manifests himself in the burning bush at Horeb. The ground is therefore holy and Moses must remove his shoes (Exod 3,5; cf. Josh 5,15). The god's appearance at Sinai makes the mountain holy, and the people need to purify and guard against encroachment (Exod 19,9-25). The sanctifying effect of the god's appearance is implied in the subsequent erection of altars and *maṣṣēbōt* (Gen 12,7; 28,17-18.22; 35,1-7.9-14; Judg 6,20-24). The dedication of the wilderness tabernacle, Solomon's temple, and Ezekiel's temple are all accompanied by the appearance of the deity which, in addition to dedicatory rites, consecrates the structures (Exod 40,34-35; Lev 9,4.6.23-24; Num 9,15; 1 Kgs 8,10-11; 2 Chr 5,11-14; 7,1-3; Ezek 43,1-5; 44,1-3).

Besides putting Yahweh physically on the scene of the action in the garden (cf. Gen 2,15.19.21), the story specifically describes his presence by the phrase *mithallēk baggān* "walking about in the garden" (3,8)<sup>(9)</sup>. The language is similar to that in Deut 23,15: "For Yahweh your God walks about in the midst of your camp" (*kī yhw̄h 'ēlōhēkā mithallēk beqereb maḥānekā*). This description is followed just a few words later by the qualitative requirement: "your camp shall be holy so that he see nothing unbecoming among you and withdraw from you" (*wēhāyā maḥānekā qādōš wēlō' yir'eh bekā 'erwat dābār wēšāb mē'aḥārēkā*)<sup>(10)</sup>. As the roving divine presence sanctifies the war camp, so it presumably sanctifies the garden.

The sacred character of the garden is further revealed by its being a protected reserve delimited from the surrounding land. The garden comprises only part of the land: it is planted apart from where the man is formed, and he is transferred to it (2,8-9.15). The garden is also guarded. The man, when brought there, is given the duty of working and *guarding* the garden's land or Eden (*le'obdāh*

<sup>(8)</sup> See D. P. WRIGHT, "Holiness (OT)", *ABD* III, 243a, 245a.

<sup>(9)</sup> WENHAM, "Sanctuary Symbolism", 400-401 (orig. 20).

<sup>(10)</sup> The deity as the subject of *hithallēk* appears in Lev 26,12, which comes after saying that Yahweh will put his sanctuary in the people's midst (v. 11). 2Sam 7,6-7 also uses the verb of the god moving about in "tent and sanctuary" before building the temple. The verb thus can have cultic echoes. For the holiness of military camps, cf. Num 5,2-3; 1 Sam 21,6.

*ûlêšomrāh*; 2,15)<sup>(11)</sup>. Support for this interpretation of the verb *šāmar* comes from the end of the garden story where duties of working and guarding are reiterated. The man is to continue his working (*‘ābad*), but now outside of the garden: “God Yahweh sent him from the Garden of Eden to work (*la‘ābōd*) the land from which he was taken” (3,23). The duty of guarding (*šāmar*) is also repeated, but is reassigned to the *kerûbîm*. They are to protect the garden from encroachment: “(Yahweh) stationed *kerûbîm*, and the flame of the whirling sword<sup>(12)</sup> on the east of the Garden of Eden to guard (*lišmōr*) the way of the tree of life” (3,24)<sup>(13)</sup>.

The garden’s sanctity is also suggested by the story taken up and used as a prophetic condemnation in Ezek 28,11-19. This is the closest extant parallel to the Genesis 2-3 story. Here we read of an already wise (*mālē’ ḥokmā*) man, even a royal figure (v.12), who lived in “Eden, the garden of God” (v.13) which is alternatively called the “holy mountain of God” (*har qōdeš ‘ēlōhîm*)<sup>(14)</sup> v.14; cf. v.16). The deity placed the man there with “the guarding outstretched/shining *kerûb*” (v.14)<sup>(15)</sup>. The man “walked about” (*hithallāktā*) among “stones of fire” (v.14). He was perfect in his ways from the day of his creation, but eventually sinned (vv. 15-16), perhaps by proud competition with the deity (v.17; cf. vv. 2-10). Therefore, he was “desecrated” (*ḥll*; v.16; cf. vv.7.18) and thus

<sup>(11)</sup> In the present context of the story, the man would presumably guard the land at least from encroaching animal pests (cf. T. STORDALEN, “Man, Soil, Garden: Basic Plot in Genesis 2-3 Reconsidered”, *JSOT* 53 [1992] 22).

<sup>(12)</sup> For this translation, see R. S. HENDEL, “‘The Flame of the Whirling Sword’: A Note on Genesis 3:24”, *JBL* 104 (1985) 671-674.

<sup>(13)</sup> One may go further and connect the terms for working and guarding to Levitic labor and guarding with respect to the wilderness tabernacle (Num 1,53; 3,7-8.25-26.28.31-32.36; 4,4.19.23-24.27-28.30-33.35.47.49; 7,5.9; 8,11.19.22.24-26; 16,9; 18,4.6.21.23.31; 31,30.47; so M. WEINFELD, *Sefer Bereshit* [Hamišša Ḥummeše Tora 1; Tel-Aviv 1975] 13; WENHAM, “Sanctuary Symbolism”, 401 [orig. 21]; on the priestly terminology, see J. MILGROM, *Studies in Levitical Terminology, I: The Encroacher and the Levite: the Term ‘Aboda* [University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies 14; Berkeley 1970] 8-16, 60-76).

<sup>(14)</sup> The term *qōdeš* may be an addition, though a “theologisch (richtig) deutender Zusatz” (my emphasis; W. ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel 2, II Teilband* [BKAT 13/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969] 675).

<sup>(15)</sup> Reading *‘et-kerûb mimšaḥ hassōkek nē’tattikā*, cf. ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel 2*, 675. For these meanings of *mimšaḥ*, which may be a gloss, see HALAT, 564.



removed from the mountain. The *kerûb* seems to have aided the deity by destroying and removing the transgressor from the area (v. 16)<sup>(16)</sup>. The rebel was cast down to the ground, to be ruined and disgraced (vv. 17-19).

Holiness is explicit in this passage, if not in the word *qōdeš*, which may be an addition, at least antonymically in the root *ḥll* in v. 16. Though this is used specifically of the man, in matters of holiness and impurity likes are associated, and thus the individual's holiness can be seen as a correlative of the garden's or mountain's holiness. The similarities between this prophetic oracle and Genesis 2-3 show they are somehow related (see part III, below); it is reasonable to assume they share the motif of a holy garden.

Divine ownership is a correlate of the garden's holiness, as Ezek 28,13-14 shows (cf. Ezek 31,8.9; Gen 13,10; Isa 51,3)<sup>(17)</sup>. In the Genesis story the garden belongs to the deity<sup>(18)</sup>. It is Yahweh who plants the garden (Gen 2,8-9). Though he places the man there, it is nowhere said that the garden is created *for* the man as if it belonged to him. Indeed, as already noted, the man is placed there to till and guard it, by all appearances, *for* the deity<sup>(19)</sup>. The deity's ownership is also reflected in the recreation that he takes in

<sup>(16)</sup> Reading *wy'bdk* with *krwb* as subject (so ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel* 2, 676).

<sup>(17)</sup> Note that Horeb/Sinai is the deity's mountain, *har ḥā'ēlōhîm* (Exod 3,1; 1 Kgs 19,8), and in other descriptions is a holy mountain (Exod 3,5; 19,9-25). See MILGROM, *Levitical Terminology*, 44-46 for the holiness of Sinai compared to sanctuary holiness.

<sup>(18)</sup> So, for example, O.H. STECK, "Die Paradieserzählung: Eine Auslegung von Genesis 2,4b-3,24", in his *Wahrnehmungen Gottes im Alten Testament* (München 1982; originally a book: BS 60; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970) 40 [orig. 45] and n.60; J.M. KENNEDY, "Peasants in Revolt: Political Allegory in Genesis 2-3", *JSOT* 47 (1990) 5; and STORDALEN, "Man, Soil, Garden", 24; contra U. CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (vol. 1; Jerusalem 1961) 76 and A. HAUSER, "Genesis 2-3: The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation", *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (ed. D.J.A. CLINES-D.M. GUNN-A.J. HAUSER) (JSOTSS 19; Sheffield 1982) 21-22.

<sup>(19)</sup> D. Jobling's Proppian (and almost gnostic!) analysis of the story where Yahweh becomes a villain aids in revealing the master-servant relation of Yahweh and the man (D. JOBLING, "Myth and Its Limits in Genesis 2.4b-3.24", in his *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible II* [JSOTSS 39; Sheffield 1986] 24-25).

the garden (3,8) and his expulsion of the couple (3,22-24). The garden is thus effectively "Yahweh's garden" <sup>(20)</sup>; being his it is holy <sup>(21)</sup>.

A few "architectural" details also tie the garden to sanctuary structure and themes and thus point to the hallowed status of the garden. As already noted, *kerûbîm* become guards after the couple sinned (3,24). The major sanctuaries in Israelite tradition display *kerûbîm* as part of the ark structure and as part of sanctuary ornamentation (Exod 25,18-22; 26,1.31; 36,8.35; 37,7-9; Num 7,89; 1 Kgs 7,29; 8,6-7; 2 Chr 3,7.10-14; 5,7-8), and even apparently as sanctuary guardians (1 Kgs 6,23-28) <sup>(22)</sup>. Trees are central to the garden story (Gen 2,9.17; 3,1-11.22.24); they also appear with *kerûbîm* in the engravings in Solomon's and Ezekiel's temples (1 Kgs

<sup>(20)</sup> Several see royal ideology in the story, but are divided about whether Yahweh is king (KENNEDY, "Allegory", *passim*, esp. 13, n. 11; E. KUTSCH, "Die Paradieserzählung Gen 2-3 und ihr Verfasser", *Studien zum Pentateuch: Walter Kornfeld zum 60. Geburtstag* [ed. G. BRAULIK] [Wien 1977] 17 and nn. 39-40; A. LEMAIRE, "Le pays d'Eden et le Bît-Adini aux origines d'un mythe", *Syria* 58 [1981] 318-319), or the man (W. BRUEGGEMANN, "From Dust to Kingship", *ZAW* 84 [1972] 1-18; E. HAAG, *Der Mensch am Anfang* [TTS 24; Trier 1970] 24, 27, 101-116; M. HUTTER, "Adam als Gärtner und König [Gen 2,8.15]", *BZ* 30 [1986] 258-262; H.G. MAY, "The King in the Garden of Eden: A Study of Ezekiel 28:12-19", *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* [ed. B.W. ANDERSON-W. HARRELSON] [New York 1962] 166-176; J. VAN SETERS, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King", *ZAW* 101 [1989] 333-342; W. WIFALL, "The Breath of His Nostrils: Gen 2:7b", *CBQ* 36 [1976] 237-240; N. WYATT, "Interpreting the Creation and Fall Story in Genesis 2-3", *ZAW* 93 [1981] 15; id., "The Hollow Crown: Ambivalent Elements in West Semitic Royal Ideology", *UF* 18 [1986] 433). Even if the man is seen as king, which is more likely from comparison to Ezek 28,11-19, the garden is to be seen as the god's: the man is the deity's delegated regent in the divine garden.

<sup>(21)</sup> As a divine garden, the deity's jealousy about eating of the Tree of Knowledge and Tree of Life makes sense. At an earlier stage of the story, if not implicitly in the present formulation, the fruit was for the deity's consumption. Such is not unthinkable in view of the human-like activities and conditions attributed to the deity elsewhere in the story (modeling clay: 2,7.19; blowing in nostrils: 2,7; performing surgery: 2,21-22; walking in the garden breeze: 3,8; making clothes: 3,21; ignorance: 3,9-13) and the Adapa tale in which we find heavenly food that grants immortality. That the trees are the god's in the god's garden solves the theological conundrum of why Yahweh puts the fruit of which he does not want the humans to eat within their grasp.

<sup>(22)</sup> WENHAM, "Sanctuary Symbolism", 401 (orig. 21).

6,29.32.35; 7,36; Ezek 41,18-20.25-26)<sup>(23)</sup>. Too, the entrance to the garden is on the east, the side where entrances to Israelite temples are found (Gen 3,24; cf. Exod 27,13; 38,13; Num 2,2-3; 3,38; Ezek 8,16 [of the first temple]; 40,1-42,20; 43,1-3)<sup>(24)</sup>.

The garden's holiness becomes plausible further when one realizes that other J tales in the primeval history reflect cultic themes and interests. The story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) deals with the issue of acceptable sacrifices. The agricultural consequences of the death of Abel may also reflect concerns about the pollution of murder (cf. Num 35,30-34)<sup>(25)</sup>. In the flood story, J shows purity interests in requiring Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals with him in the ark rather than a single pair (Gen 7,2.8; 8,20). These are for sacrifice which is featured at the end of this story (8,20-21). Finally the Tower of Babel story (11,1-9) tells of building a structure that may be cultic in nature<sup>(26)</sup>.

The garden's holiness is also made plausible in view of other creation stories that manifest cultic and ritual themes. P's cosmogony in Genesis 1,1-2,4a is implicitly concerned about festival occasions in the passage about the creation of the luminaries (1,14-19). It also focuses on and provides the foundation for the observance of the Sabbath (2,1-3)<sup>(27)</sup>. Nonbiblical texts show

<sup>(23)</sup> Cf. K. JAROS, "Die Motive der Heiligen Bäume und der Schlange in Gen 2-3", *ZAW* 92 (1980) 211-212.

<sup>(24)</sup> WENHAM, "Sanctuary Symbolism", 401 (orig. 21). By the way, understanding *miqqedem* *le-* thus removes the difficulty of an oriental and occidental location of the garden (2,8 vs. 3,24). The people's habitation is not necessarily on the east in 3,24, only the entrance — the path — to the garden. Cf. H. GESE, "Der bewachte Lebensbaum und die Heroen: Zwei mythologische Ergänzungen zur Urgeschichte der Quelle J", *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift für Karl Elliger zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. GESE-H.-P. RÜGER) (AOAT 18; Kevelaer-Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973) 82. He says the east entrance may be an indication the composer of 3,22.24 conceived of the garden as an "Urbild des Tempels".

<sup>(25)</sup> See D.P. WRIGHT, "Deuteronomy 21:1-9 as a Rite of Elimination", *CBQ* 49 (1987) 387-403.

<sup>(26)</sup> On cultic matters in Genesis, see G.J. WENHAM, "The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice", *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D.P. WRIGHT-D.N. FREEDMAN-A. HURVITZ) (Winona Lake, IN 1995) 93-102.

<sup>(27)</sup> Further, the P creation text uses language connected with the construction of the sanctuary; see M. WEINFELD, "Sabbath, Temple and

similar interests. The Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, used in the new year liturgy, speaks about the building of cellae, sanctuaries, shrines, and temples (I 75-76; IV 1,11-12,141-146; V 119-129; VI 51-53, 62-64, 67-68,70) as well as the performance of rites (VI 77,109-111, 113-118). Tablet V deals with the arrangement of the constellations and the measurement of time, reminiscent of but much more detailed than Genesis 1,14-18. In the Old Babylonian text of Atrahasis, humans are created to maintain the cult among other duties (I 337-339). The gods also use ritual techniques to create humans (I 194-304). From Egypt, the so-called "Memphite Theology" summarizes Ptah's creative acts (cols. 59-61). According to this he "placed the gods in their shrines, he settled their offerings" <sup>(28)</sup>.

The foregoing evidence taken as a whole is impressive and provides strong reason for believing that the garden is to be considered sacred <sup>(29)</sup>. But, as noted at the beginning of this study, the human pair's apparent sexual activity and capabilities as well as their possible death in the garden is inconsistent with the garden's holiness. The force of this latter evidence must now be examined.

## II. Sex and Death in the Garden

It is not easy to determine whether the couple is sexually capable and active and whether death is possible in the garden before eating the fruit. The story gives clues in both directions. An

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the Enthronement of the Lord — The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1-2:3", *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. CAQUOT-M. DELCOR) (AOAT 212; Kevelaer-Neukirchen-Vluyn 1981) 501-512.

<sup>(28)</sup> Translation of M. LICHTHEIM, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume 1: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley 1973) 55; cf. *ANET*, 5.

<sup>(29)</sup> Other parallels that have been identified (cf. WENHAM, "Sanctuary Symbolism", 400-404 [orig. 20-23]) are not as precise or convincing: (a) the vocabulary for clothing the people in the garden (Gen 3,21) and for clothing priests (Exod 28,41; 29,8; 40,14; Lev 8,13); (b) the Tree of Life and trees planted or found at sanctuaries (cf. Gen 21,33); (c) the trees of the garden and the menorah; (d) rivers in Eden and rivers or water supplies in sanctuaries and temples (Ezek 47,1-12); (e) the "knowledge of good and evil" and torah instruction; (f) gold and certain precious stones in the river pericope and the same in priestly clothing (Exod 25,7; 28,9-14.20; 1 Chr 29,2).

argument could be made that the pair is sexually active and that death is avoidable<sup>(30)</sup>. If this were sustained, it would not only shore

(30) For the view that sex was not practiced or the couple was not sexually mature until or after eating the fruit, in the present or an earlier version of the story (those with the latter view are marked \*), see, for example, L.M. BECHTEL, "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-3.24", *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (ed. A. BRENNER) (Feminist Companion to the Bible 2; Sheffield 1993) 84-86, 88, 116-117; \*J. BEGRICH, "Die Paradieserzählung: Eine literargeschichtliche Studie", *ZAW* 50 (1932) 107; G.W. BUCHANAN, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil", *JBL* 75 (1956) 119; S.R. DRIVER, *The Book of Genesis* (London 101916) 46; R. GORDIS, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls", *JBL* 76 (1957) 130-138; \*GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 28, cf. 29-31; L.F. HARTMAN, "Sin in Paradise", *CBQ* 20 (1958) 36; \*P. HUMBERT, "Mythe de création et mythe paradisiaque dans le second chapitre de la Genèse", *RHPR* 16 (1936) 448-449, 457; id., *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse* (Mémoires de l'Université de Neuchâtel 14; Neuchâtel 1940) 64-65, 114; O. LORETZ, *Schöpfung und Mythos* (SBS 32; Stuttgart 1968) 112-113, 117-118, 128 (cf. 122); Y. MARZEL, "'Ets-haDa'at Tov vaRa'c — Hakkarat Hayyim uMavet", *Beth Mikra* 29 (1983-84) 356, 360; \*D. MICHEL, "Ihr werdet sein wie Gott: Gedanken zur Sündenfallgeschichte in Genesis 3", *Menschwerdung Gottes — Vergöttlichung von Menschen* (ed. D. ZELLER) (NTOA; Freiburg, Schweiz—Göttingen 1988) 77-81; S. NIDITCH, *Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation* (Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities 6; Chico, CA 1985) 30-31, 33; \*H.-F. RICHTER, "Zur Urgeschichte des Jahwisten", *BN* 34 (1986) 40-41, 45; J.W. ROSENBERG, "The Garden Story Forward and Backward", *Prooftexts* 1 (1981) 17; \*W.H. SCHMIDT, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (WMANT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn 21967) 223 and n.2; J. SKINNER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh 21930) 71, 76; \*J. A., SOGGIN, "The Fall of Man in the Third Chapter of Genesis", in his *Old Testament and Oriental Studies* (BibOr 29; Rome 1975) 102, 107-108; E.A. SPEISER, *Genesis* (AB 1; Garden City, NY 1964) 26-27; WEINFELD, *Bereshit*, 12a; E. VAN WOLDE, *Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2-3* (Assen-Maastricht 1989) 99, 107-108, 205, 217-218; id., *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1-11* (Biblical Interpretation Series 6; Leiden 1994) 20-21, 38-39, 41. Cf. JOBLING, "Myth and Its Limits", 29-31, 33-35; id., "The Myth Semantics of Genesis 2:4b-3:24", *Semeia* 44 (1980) 44-46; J.L. MCKENZIE, "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3", in his *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Milwaukee 1963) 172-174.

For the view that death was avoidable in some manner, in the present or an earlier version of the story (those with the latter view are marked \*), see: R.J. CLIFFORD, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (CBQMS 26; Washington, DC 1994) 147-148; G.W. COATS, *Genesis*:

up the argument that the garden is sacred, it might even mean that the story offers an etiology and rationale for impurity customs in the Israelite cult. That is, all ritual impurities can be subsumed under the categories of sex and death<sup>(31)</sup>. These correlate with sexuality and death introduced with the first couple's rebellion<sup>(32)</sup>. The story shows, so the argument would go, how these human traits arose, and, by reference to the couple's exclusion from the holy garden, why they are at odds with what is hallowed<sup>(33)</sup>.

As interesting and attractive as this argument is, the stronger argument in the end is that the man and woman are sexually active and are susceptible to death even while they are in the garden before eating the fruit<sup>(34)</sup>. Since the issues of sexuality and death are intertwined with one another, the argument here will move back and forth between them as logic requires.

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*With an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids 1983) 53; DRIVER, *Genesis*, 50; HARTMAN, "Sin", 35-36; HUMBERT, *Études*, 116-151; \*JAROŠ, "Motive", 205 and n.3 (but cf. 205-207); LORETZ, *Schöpfung*, 112, 128; MARZEL, "'Ets-HaDa'at", 359; NIDITCH, *Chaos*, 31; \*L. RUPPERT, "Die Sündenfallerzählung (Gn 3) in vorjahwistischer Tradition und Interpretation", *BZ* 15 (1971) 197, 199 (cf. 200); SCHMIDT, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 210; VAN WOLDE, *Semiotic Analysis*, 100, 196-197; id., *Words*, 38-39, 44. Cf. F. HVIDBERG, "The Canaanite Background of Gen. I-III", *VT* 10 (1960) 290, 291; JOBLING, "Myth and Its Limits", 29, 31, 37; id., "Myth Semantics", 44-46.

<sup>(31)</sup> In P, for example, there are four sources of pollution: sexual discharges, death-related impurities (certain animal carcasses and human corpses), the disease *šāra'at* ("surface-affliction"), and cultic impurities. *šāra'at* can be included among death-related impurities (cf. Num 12,12). Cultic impurities (such as the purgation offering, see note 7) are of an auxiliary nature, only existing to rectify the effect of sin or the other impurities. These last impurities may be bracketed out. See WRIGHT, "Unclean", 730a.

<sup>(32)</sup> Cf. the argument for this in WRIGHT, "Unclean", 739a.

<sup>(33)</sup> One could argue even further that Genesis 2-4 are to be considered together and display a tripartite "geography of impurity" where sex and death require exclusion from the holy garden, and the more grievous sin of murder, which can generate impurity (see note 25), requires exile from the human habitation as well (4,12-14). This would correlate with P's tripartite geography of impurity (cf. WRIGHT, "Unclean", 738-739).

<sup>(34)</sup> For arguments along this line, see J. BARR, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis 1992) 57-73; J.A. BAILEY, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3", *JBL* 89 (1970) 144-148; STECK, "Paradieserzählung", 70-71, 98, 102, 103 n.272 [orig. 78-80, 109-110, 113-114, 115 n.272]; HUMBERT, "Mythe", 451.

A chief consideration is the expectation of uniformity between the humans' and animals' situations. There is no reason to believe that the animals are not sexually active and not subject to death from the beginning of their creation. Since the man is created from the ground as the animals are, and since the woman derives from him, it is reasonable to suppose that the couple has the same basic physical constitution as the animals and is therefore sexually active and subject to death. To argue the matter differently, if the fruit is the means whereby human sexuality and mortality begin, one would expect the animals to have to eat of this or some similar fruit. The story, of course, contains no whisper of such a requirement or event.

One might respond that the story's focus is on the humans, not the animals, and consequently that the story did not seek to tell how the animals came to be sexual and liable to death. It is hard, however, to imagine why this hole was left if a major point of the story is to tell how sexuality and death were introduced into the world. One might alternatively respond that the humans' eating brought about sexuality and susceptibility to death in animals as well as themselves. But a sympathetic transference of the consumption's effect goes far beyond the story's burden. It is actually precluded by the logic of the story. If the animals share in the effects of the consumption, then their intellectual capacities should also be expanded along with those of the humans. The story is actually telling of something that uniquely happens to the humans over against the animals.

Another sign that the couple is sexually functional before eating the fruit is the punishment of painful pregnancy in 3,16. It implies that less painful pregnancy is possible before the consumption. If eating the fruit inaugurates sexuality, painful pregnancy would be a simple fact of life and not need to be a point of special sanction. The punishment of the male bears out this conclusion. The man is punished in regard to his main productive activity, i.e., agricultural work (3,17-19). This work is something in which he is engaged before eating the fruit (2,15). The punishment only makes this preexistent labor more difficult. Similarly the woman is punished in regard to her main productive activity as the story sees it, i.e., childbearing. As in the man's case, the woman's work, or at least the capacity for it, should precede eating fruit. If so, her punishment parallels the man's precisely: her preexistent labor is now made more difficult.

The rationale in 2,24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cling to his wife so they become one flesh”, also attests to the couple’s sexual capacities before eating the fruit. Though it involves the bonding of man and woman in more than just a sexual way, and though it is prospective in speaking about a man leaving his parents, relatives the first man does not have, its placement just after the creation of the woman and its implied inclusion of sexual connection indicates that the pair has sexual capacity as soon as they are brought together<sup>(35)</sup>.

A piece of evidence that could support the idea that sexuality does not begin until the pair eat the fruit is that the woman is named *ḥawwâ* (Eve) — which is intended to mean something like “Life” in the present context as the gloss *’ēm kol-ḥay* “mother of all that lives” indicates<sup>(36)</sup> — only at the end of the story (3,20), but not at 2,23 where, just after being created, she is called simply *’iššâ* “woman”. Why is the name that reflects sexually fecundity reserved for after the consumption of the fruit if the woman is sexually capable at the beginning of her creation? The solution is found in how the death penalty of 2,17 is played out — or not played out.

As several have noted, the penalty in 2,17 is formulated in a way so as to suggest that its execution would be swift. This implication is potent enough to make one think that Yahweh decides not to carry out the penalty but simply let the couple die a natural and eventual death<sup>(37)</sup>. Support for this judgment is found in the lack of any death penalty in the explicit punishments of 3,14-19.

<sup>(35)</sup> The blessing-command to multiply in Gen 1,28 of course cannot be used for determining whether the couple is sexually active before eating the fruit since it is from P, not J. Nonetheless, it does not pose an inconsistency between the two texts, and in a reading which takes the two stories together, it transforms the couple’s sexual behavior in the garden from a natural activity to one expressly ordained by the deity.

<sup>(36)</sup> For possible etymologies and explanations of *ḥawwâ*, see H. N. WALLACE, *The Eden Narrative* (HSM 32; Atlanta 1985) 147-161 (cf. LORETZ, *Schöpfung*, 119, n. 40; BARR, *Garden of Eden*, 65).

<sup>(37)</sup> R. W. L. MOBERLY, “Did the Serpent Get It Right?”, *JTS* 39 (1988) 1-27; J. DUS, “Zwei Schichten der biblischen Paradiesgeschichte”, *ZAW* 71 (1959) 106-107 and n. 35; W. FUB, *Die sogenannte Paradieserzählung* (Gütersloh 1968) 59-60; GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 10; KENNEDY, “Allegory”, 10-11; SCHMIDT, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 208; SKINNER, *Genesis*, 67; STECK, “Paradieserzählung”, 98, 102 (orig. 109-110, 113-114).



The passing reference to returning to the ground in 3,19 hardly qualifies as a statement of punishment.

If Yahweh does not execute the penalty of 2,17, how does the threat function in the context? Is it not then superfluous? No. The story can be understood as displaying a tension between the deity's need to sustain creation and vent his punishing anger. If he were to execute the penalty, creation would effectively come to naught. Humans, the center of the deity's creation, would vanish from the scene. As opposed to the flood where a favored individual is able to continue the race (Gen 6,8.9; 7,1), or rebellions in the wilderness where Moses' posterity might replace the Israelites (Exod 32,9-10; Num 14,11-25; Deut 9,13-14; cf. Ezek 20,13-17), here at the beginning of creation there is no one else to carry on the line. Hence Yahweh relents and institutes alternative punishments (Gen 3,14-19) which allow humanity to continue.

Naming the woman "Eve... the mother of all that lives" late in 3,20 is to be explained in connection with Yahweh's repentance. Despite the fact that punishment has been exacted, the man here celebrates the chance and blessing of continued existence by naming his wife Eve. It is not that sexual activity begins here; it is rather that the pair's lives have been spared, and they are allowed to raise up posterity. Eve thus becomes "the mother of all that lives" <sup>(38)</sup>. This interpretation, by the way, suggests that though the man and woman are sexually capable from the beginning, they have not yet had children, otherwise their children, like Noah or Moses, might have continued the human line. This explains why there is no reference to birth before the eating.

The explanation just given shows that the death penalty in 2,17 cannot be used to argue that the man and woman are immortal or can otherwise avoid death. It might be thought this verse means that the man and woman will live indefinitely until they eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. But the threat of death can be explained otherwise, as has just been shown. Thus this, the main proof for the pair's immortality, dissolves.

That the man and woman are sexually able and active from the beginning helps explain more clearly the effect of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It has always been difficult to see

<sup>(38)</sup> Cf. the similar conclusion in STECK, "Paradieserzählung", 103 (orig. 114-115).

how eating the fruit, if it involves sexual activation, can lead to "becoming like the gods" (3,5.22) who are presumably nonsexual or not distinctively sexual over against animal creation<sup>(39)</sup>. If the fruit does not initiate sexual ability and activity, this difficulty does not arise. The man and woman acquire only god-like intelligence, rationality, and discernment (3,5.22)<sup>(40)</sup>.

The challenge to a divine prerogative through eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, when pruned of its sexual connotations, stands in neat parallelism to another arboreal challenge to the divine: eating of the Tree of Life. If the couple eats the fruit of the knowledge tree they gain divine knowledge; if they eat of the life tree they gain divine life. As the latter offers only a single capacity, i.e., eternal life, so it makes sense that the former offers only a single capacity, i.e., discernment.

The lack of a prohibition about eating the Tree of Life has been used to argue that the couple can eat of this tree before eating of the Tree of Knowledge in order to stave off death<sup>(41)</sup>. Thus they are effectively immortal, it is said, until they eat of the explicitly

(39) Cf. T. FRYMER-KENSKY, "Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible", *Semeia* 45 (1989) 90-91; H.S. STERN, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil", *VT* 8 (1958) 407-408; WEINFELD, *Bereshit*, 12. MICHEL, "Ihr werdet sein wie Gott", 77-80, supposes that eating the fruit at an early stage of the myth was a means of acquiring divine sexuality (with its possibilities of creation and desire), and that the Israelite interpretation (in the present context) changed so that the man and woman are sexual from the beginning (81-82).

(40) The phrase "knowledge of good and evil" does not seem specifically connected with sexual experience or maturation, but rather general knowledge, discernment, and wisdom. Similar phraseology is used of ignorance in young children (Deut 1,39; Isa 7,15-16) and possibly senility in an elderly person (2 Sam 19,35-36). In some cases similar phraseology is connected with a divine capacity for wisdom and judgment (2 Sam 14,17 [cf. v. 20]; 1 Kgs 3,9 [cf. v. 28]). On the meaning, see BUCHANAN, "Meaning", 114-120; W.M. CLARK, "A Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2-3", *JBL* 88 (1969) 266-278; GORDIS, "Knowledge", 123-138; HUMBERT, "Mythe", 453-455; id., *Études*, 82-116; MARZEL, "'Ets-haDa'at", 352-360; R.A. ODEN, "Divine Aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11", *ZAW* 93 (1981) 211-213; STERN, "Knowledge", 405-418; J. STOEBE, "Gut und Böse in der Jahwistischen Quelle des Pentateuch", *ZAW* 65 (1953) 188-204.

(41) E.g., COATS, *Genesis*, 53; GORDIS, "Knowledge", 134; MARZEL, "'Ets-haDa'at", 359; J.M. SASSON, "*welō* yitbōšāšū (Gen 2,25) and Its Implications", *Bib* 66 (1985) 421.

banned fruit. This assumption is questionable. The story reflects Yahweh's jealousy about the unique attributes of divine beings. The people are not to acquire divine knowledge, and when they do he expressly forbids consuming fruit from the Tree of Life. He does not want people to be like the gods. Yahweh displays a similar spirit in the Tower of Babel tale, another J story (11,1-9)<sup>(42)</sup>. From this evidence it seems more likely that the couple is not to eat of the Tree of Life as well. Perhaps this prohibition is not stated earlier on because the story is an imperfect elaboration of a simpler story which had only the Tree of Knowledge<sup>(43)</sup>.

In any case, though the story lacks an explicit prohibition about eating from the Tree of Life, the man and woman appear to have avoided it. The wording of 3,22 (note particularly the adverb *gam* "also") indicates that by this time the couple has not eaten of this tree<sup>(44)</sup>. And there is certainly no requirement that they eat of it. Thus, even if they can eat of this tree, they do not and thus do not have an immortal status in the garden. By all appearances, they can die there naturally.

Two related bits of data that appear to prove that the man and woman are not sexually active in the garden are that immediately after they eat they recognize their nakedness (3,7) and that immediately after the man confesses his nakedness Yahweh asks if he has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge (3,8-11). Eating the fruit seems causally connected with sexual cognition. Why these reactions if the eating has nothing to do with sex? The solution lies in understanding the larger etiological orientation of the story. One of its goals is to explain the difference between humans and animals, specifically in regard to humans' superior intelligence<sup>(45)</sup>. How did

<sup>(42)</sup> On the issue of competition with the deity, see ODEN, "Divine Aspirations", 197-216; R. A. DI VITO, "The Demarcation of Divine and Human Realms in Genesis 2-11", *Creation in the Biblical Traditions* (ed. R. J. CLIFFORD-J. J. COLLINS) (CBQMS 24; Washington, DC 1992) 39-56; cf. D. J. A. CLINES, "Theme in Genesis 1-11", *CBQ* 38 (1976) 483-507.

<sup>(43)</sup> An alternative interpretation in the full context of the story that makes sense of why the pair did not eat of the Tree of Life is that they could not realize its significance until they ate of the Tree of Knowledge (cf. Gen 3,22; K. R. JOINES, "The Serpent in Gen 3", *ZAW* 87 [1975] 7; and similarly, HUMBERT, "Mythe", 447-448, 453; id., *Études*, 22-23).

<sup>(44)</sup> W. H. PROPP, "Eden Sketches", *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. W. H. PROPP-B. HALPERN-D. N. FREEDMAN) (Winona Lake, IN 1990) 192.

<sup>(45)</sup> A similar disjunction is found in the Gilgamesh story. After Shamhat

humans come to be so notably set apart from the rest of the animals? This happened, as discussed above, by their ingesting food that gave them intellectual abilities akin to those of the gods. Gaining this power of discernment, according to the story, led immediately to the establishment of the *chief visible difference* between humans and animals: clothing. Thus the focus on nakedness does not reflect a concern about sexuality, but rather why humans wear clothes as opposed to animals. Note that the story mentions making clothes not just once but twice (3,7.21). The statement that before eating the fruit the man and woman were naked and not embarrassed (2,25) stresses the affinity and proximity of humans to the animals at that point in the story. These considerations show, incidentally, that if there is a vertical movement in the story, it is not a “Fall”, but an “Ascension”, toward the rank and species of deity.

Sometimes it is argued that eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is to be understood metaphorically, a structural metaphor, to use Lakoff's and Johnson's terminology, where “Sex is Eating”<sup>(46)</sup>. This metaphor is alive not only in modern poetry and colloquial speech but also in ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts<sup>(47)</sup>. For example, in Proverbs an adulteress “eats and wipes off her mouth, and then says, ‘I have done nothing wrong’” (30,20)<sup>(48)</sup>. More positively in Song of Songs, the woman's “shoots(?) are a paradise of pomegranates, with choice fruit”, and she invites her beloved to “come to his [my?] garden and eat its choice fruit” (4,13.16)<sup>(49)</sup>. The woman's “‘valley’ [pudenda] is like a round bowl which does not lack mixed wine” and her “belly is a heap of wheat, surrounded with lilies” (7,3)<sup>(50)</sup>.

seduces and pleasures Enkidu, the animals are alienated from him and he is then brought into civilization (I iv 23-36).

<sup>(46)</sup> See G. LAKOFF–M. JOHNSON, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago 1980).

<sup>(47)</sup> I thank R. A. Veenker for sharing the manuscript of his paper, “Forbidden Fruit: Ancient Near Eastern Sexual Metaphors”, given at the 1993 SBL annual meeting and the 1995 AOS annual meeting which discusses cases from the Bible and Mesopotamia.

<sup>(48)</sup> On the metaphor, see W. MCKANE, *Proverbs* (OTL; Philadelphia 1970) 658.

<sup>(49)</sup> R. MURPHY, *The Song of Songs* (Hermeneia Commentary; Minneapolis 1990) 161, n. 14, notes the erotic character of this and all the language in 4,12–5,1.

<sup>(50)</sup> Cf. MURPHY, *Song*, 182, 185-186.

Despite the broad attestation of this metaphor, it is doubtful if the fruit eating in our story stands for sexual activity. First of all, the eating and the fruit in the story are conceived of as real, not simply metaphors. The tree is planted (2,9) and it exists among other trees (2,16-17; 3,1-5). Secondly, eating is something that the man and certainly the woman do independently of each other (cf. 3,6). Thirdly, eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is not the only instance of fruit eating in the story. The people may eat of all the trees in the garden save one (2,16-17; 3,2-3), and if they only had the chance they might partake of the Tree of Life. Just as these other cases are not sexual metaphors, so eating from the Tree of Knowledge is not a metaphor. Finally, if the first instance of sexual intercourse were sinful, then all ensuing instances should be equally sinful<sup>(51)</sup>. This view, however, cannot be sustained.

One last piece of evidence that might demonstrate that sexual activity begins with eating the fruit is the Gilgamesh epic. The possible parallels between this story and J's garden story are numerous: Enkidu is created out of clay by deity (I ii 34); he has association with the animals until a woman (Shamhat, the harlot) appears on the scene (I ii 36-iv 5); she engages him in sex (I iv 6-21; OB II ii 6-8); this sets him apart from the animals (I iv 22-28); as a result of his sexual activity he becomes "very wise" (I iv 29); he also has "become like a god" (I iv 34; cf. OB II ii 11); Enkidu is clothed (OB II ii 27-28); the woman gives him food to eat (OB II iii 6-16); finally, much of the rest of the Gilgamesh story deals with the question of human immortality and even sees immortality as available to Gilgamesh through ingestion of a certain plant, a chance, however, that is foiled by a snake (XI 287-288)<sup>(52)</sup>. These possible common motifs indicate that the stories are related somehow, and this provides grounds for assuming that sexuality and acquisition of knowledge are connected in Genesis 2-3<sup>(53)</sup>.

<sup>(51)</sup> Cf. LORETZ, *Schöpfung*, 112-113.

<sup>(52)</sup> One could expand the parallel to include the flood story in Gilgamesh XI and the J portion of Genesis 6-8.

<sup>(53)</sup> Another supposed evidence of sexual activity is the term 'ēden which means "pleasure", perhaps including the notion of sexual pleasure (cf. 'ednâ in Gen. 18,12; see ANDERSON, "Celibacy", 137-138 for evidence). This is not decisive since the garden seems to have its designation not from what humans might do there, but from the fertility of the land and the lushness of the plantation (cf. the sense of 'ēden in Isa 51,3; Joel 2,3). For

While the two stories likely share some common traditional blood (directed dependence on the Gilgamesh story is unlikely, however), the development of the biblical story is complex as tradition-historical analysis has shown (see below). Traditions have been conflated and creatively revised to yield a rather unique product in Genesis 2–3. It is not impossible that, in the course of this development, sexuality and knowledge, perhaps once causally tied together as in the Gilgamesh story, were disconnected and given different places and functions in the story<sup>(54)</sup>. Enlightenment became associated with eating the fruit of a tree, something not found in the Gilgamesh story.

This tour of evidence leads quite decisively to the conclusion that, in the present context of the story, the man and woman are sexually active in the garden and that theoretically they can die there of natural or accidental causes. The contradiction is thus patent: impure activities and phenomena seem to exist in a holy garden.

### III. Explaining the Contradiction

In seeking an explanation for the discrepancy between the holiness of the garden and the impurity allowed or possible in it, four arguments may be immediately dismissed. First, it cannot be said that there are two types of holiness: one, a cultic holiness to which impurity is a threat, and another, found in connection with the Garden of Eden, to which impurity is not a threat. The data from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible do not support this<sup>(55)</sup>. Moreover, much of the evidence used to argue the garden's sanctity comes specifically from the cultic sphere and/or is part of systems, traditions, or texts that explicitly acknowledge the danger that sexual discharges and death pose to what is holy. To use this

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the etymology of the term, see I. CORNELIUS, "Paradise Motifs in the 'Eschatology' of the Minor Prophets and the Iconography of the Ancient Near East; The Concepts of Fertility, Water, Trees and 'Tierfrieden' and Gen 2–3", *JNSL* 14 (1988) 47; LEMAIRE, "Eden", 313–319; A.R. MILLARD, "The Etymology of Eden", *VT* 34 (1984) 103–105; D.T. TSUMURA, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation* (JSOTSS 83; Sheffield 1989) 123–137.

<sup>(54)</sup> Cf. BAILEY, "Initiation", 147; on the Bible's rearrangement of motifs, cf. CLIFFORD, *Creation Accounts*, 148–149.

<sup>(55)</sup> See WRIGHT, "Holiness".

evidence as proof of the garden's status is to admit the threat that impurity poses.

A related argument, that the garden has only a low level of holiness such that sex and death do not threaten it, cannot be sustained. While it is true that various traditions acknowledge different degrees of holiness, and that some impurities may exist in zones of lesser holiness, these degrees receive their definition by reference to an area which is considered most holy and from which all impurities are excluded<sup>(56)</sup>. In Genesis 2–3, however, the garden is the most holy area, and that presupposes a high degree of holiness<sup>(57)</sup>. Also, to say its holiness is minor is to attribute little distinctiveness to it. Not much would be gained by portraying the garden in this way. Furthermore, much of the evidence used to argue the garden's holiness is connected to holy places — temples and sanctuaries — that are of a much higher degree of holiness than this argument would presume for the garden. The garden should have a degree of holiness similar to these locales.

It cannot be argued, moreover, that J does not believe that matters of sex and death are impure. J mentions impurities enough to reveal its basic attitude toward them. Not many chapters away the source has Noah taking only one pair of unclean animals but seven pairs of clean animals, apparently for sacrifice (Gen 7,2.8; 8,20). This by itself shows that, for J, even at an early point in its conception of human history, holiness requires purity. Cultic rules taken up by J (if these are not Deuteronomic or “pre-

(<sup>56</sup>) Hence the wilderness camp in the priestly writings, which can be considered holy to some degree because of the deity's presence, allows some impurities to remain there (cf. Num 5,1-4). But in this case the sanctuary area itself is more holy and all impurities are restricted from it (see note 7, above). Similarly, Jer 31,38-40 (Cf. Zech 14,20-21) sees Jerusalem as a whole becoming holy, and presumably at least lesser impurities would be allowed there. But again the city's temple, which is presumed to exist in these expectations for the future (Jer 27,16-22; 31,14; 33,11.18; Zech 14,20-21), is certainly a more holy spot, from which all impurities are to be excluded. The ideology of Jerusalem's holiness can lead to the exclusion of all the impure from it (Isa 52,1; cf. 11QTemple<sup>a</sup> which excludes all impurities from the city in which the temple is found [45:12-47:18]). On the holiness of the land and Jerusalem, see WRIGHT, “Holiness”, 243a.

(<sup>57</sup>) It is doubtful that one can argue that the specific area where the trees are found is holier than the rest of the garden (see the considerations of FUB, *Paradieserzählung*, 72, 90-93; JAROŠ, “Motive”, 205, 210).

Deuteronomic") require that the firstborn of an ass, an unclean animal, be redeemed or secularly killed; it cannot be sacrificed (Exod 13,13; 34,20). The source-critically complex chapter of Exodus 19 may reveal J's knowledge of sexual impurities. Some have assigned v.15 to J<sup>(58)</sup>, which warns men to prepare for the upcoming theophany by staying away from their wives; i.e., sex is prohibited in contact with the divine. A hint that corpses are impure is found in Gen 50,10 where Israel (Jacob) is mourned seven days, the same length of time of corpse contamination in P (cf. Num 19,14). Also of significance in gauging J's perspective is that the impurity of sex and death is broadly recognized by other biblical sources and traditions. J would be quite exceptional if it did not share these views<sup>(59)</sup>.

Finally, the possible argument that sex and death are not impure until after eating the fruit does not hold up because of lack of evidence. Human nature has not been altered so as to make these phenomena threatening to the deity after eating the fruit.

Another explanation, a diachronic one, provides a solution. Various redaction-, literary-, and tradition-historical analyses of Genesis 2-3 have been proposed over the last century<sup>(60)</sup>. A number of studies, including those by H. Gunkel, J. Begrich, P. Humbert, W.H. Schmidt, C. Westermann, have argued that the creation story

<sup>(58)</sup> Cf. B. CHILDS, *The Book of Exodus* (OTL; Philadelphia 1974) 345.

<sup>(59)</sup> For the impurity of sexual discharges in E (if this can be separated out as a distinct tradition or source; see note 6): Gen 31,35(?); Exod 19,10,14; D: Deut 23,10-15; Dtr-H: 1 Sam 21,4-7; 2 Sam 3,29; 11,2-4,11; Prophets: Isa 30,22; P,H, Ezekiel: Lev 12; 15; 18,19; 20,18; 22,4; Num 5,2-3; Ezek 7,19-20; 18,6; 22,10; 36,17. For the impurity of corpses in D: Deut 26,14; Dtr-H: 1 Sam 31,13; 2 Kgs 11,15; 23,6; Prophets: Isa 65,4; Jer 19,11-13; Hos 9,4; Hag 2,13; P,H, Ezekiel: Lev 10,4-5; 21,1-4,11; 22,4; Num 5,2-3; 6,6-12; 9,7,10; 19,1-22; 31,13-24; Ezek 9,7; 39,11-16; 43,7-9; 44,25-27. For corpse contamination, one can further compare execution at or outside the gates of the city, perhaps in part to keep impurity outside the habitation (cf. Gen 38,24-25; Lev 24,14,23; Num 15,35-36; Deut 17,5; 21,19-21; 22,24; 1 Kgs 21,13; cf. Josh 7,24-26; 2 Sam 21,9). On burials, see D.P. WRIGHT, *The Disposal of Impurity* (SBLDS 101; Atlanta 1987) 115-128.

<sup>(60)</sup> For more recent solutions other than those in the next note, see C. DOHMEN, *Schöpfung und Tod: Die Entfaltung theologischer und anthropologischer Konzeptionen in Gen 2/3* (SBB 17; Stuttgart 1988); DUS, "Zwei Schichten", 97-113; FUB, *Paradieserzählung*, 25-82; H. HAAG, "Die Komposition der Sündenfall-Erzählung", *TQ* 146 (1966) 1-7; KUTSCH,



in Genesis 2 is to be sorted out as a tradition (or source) separate from the larger paradise materials in Genesis 2–3<sup>(61)</sup>. While each scholar's judgment differs to some extent as to what should be included in the creation story, its outlines are quite well agreed upon. In my estimation it includes in 2,4b-5.7.9a (perhaps excluding *nehmād...lma'ākāl*).18-23.(24). It recounts the condition of the earth prior to population, the creation of the first man, the creation of trees from the ground, and the creation of a helper, first the animals, and then finally and successfully, the woman. The story culminates and concludes with the man's recognition of the deity's success in v. 23 and perhaps the etiology in v. 24<sup>(62)</sup>.

The creation story stands out against the rest of Genesis 2–3, not only in its wholeness, but in its different interests and perspectives. For example, it goes off in a direction different from the paradise materials as it works out the relationships between males, females, and animals. The experiment of creating animals and then the woman as a helper seems wholly unrelated to the course of a story about sin and punishment. Too, the creation

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"Paradieserzählung", 9-24; RICHTER, "Urgeschichte", 39-57; SOGGIN, "Fall of Man", 90-91, 107-111; STECK, "Paradieserzählung", 16-58 (orig. 17-66); B. VAWTER, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (Garden City, NY 1977) 64-65.

<sup>(61)</sup> GUNKEL, *Genesis*, 1-4, 25-40; BEGRICH, "Paradieserzählung", esp. 107-108; HUMBERT, "Mythe", 445-461; id., *Études*, 48-81; SCHMIDT, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 194-229; C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis (1. Teilband, Genesis 1–11)* (BKAT 1/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1974) 259-269. For others with similar views and who at least sort out a creation tradition or story from the rest, see D. CARR, "The Politics of Textual Subversion: A Diachronic Perspective on the Garden of Eden Story", *JBL* 112 (1993) 577-583; GESE, "Lebensbaum", 77; JAROŠ, "Motive", 204-205; MCKENZIE, "Literary Characteristics", 160-170; RUPPERT, "Sündenfallerzählung", 185-196, 199-202; J. SCHARBERT, "Quellen und Redaktion in Gen 2,4b-4,16", *BZ* 18 (1974) 45-64; P. E. S. THOMPSON, "The Yahwist Creation Story", *VT* 21 (1971) 197-203; P. WEIMAR, *Untersuchungen zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (BZAW 146; Berlin 1977), summarized in DOHMEN, *Schöpfung*, 24-26; WYATT, "Interpreting the Creation", 11-13.

<sup>(62)</sup> Verse 24 is climactic, but at the same time may be secondary (on some of the issues, see A. TOSATO, "On Genesis 2:24", *CBQ* 52 [1990] 389-409; R. B. LAWTON, "Genesis 2:24: Trite or Tragic?", *JBL* 105 [1986] 97-98; B. LONG, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament* [BZAW 108; Berlin 1968] 53-54).

story's perspectives about human characteristics are different from the paradise materials. The man already has knowledge and discernment: he can name animals and recognize the fitness of the woman as his helper<sup>(63)</sup>. The deity is also portrayed differently: he is helpful and beneficent, caring for the needs of the man<sup>(64)</sup>. This contrasts with the jealous god of the paradise materials.

The paradise materials, the portions remaining after separating out the creation story, are less coherent as a narrative. Certainly at their heart is a tale about sin in the Garden of Eden and expulsion therefrom, but the exact parameters and content of this paradise story are difficult to isolate and define. This is because it may have already been a complex story or tradition, containing varied themes, when the Yahwist took it up and joined it with the creation story. The difficulty is also due to the weaving of paradise materials into the creation story (2,8abα.9aβ[except *kol-ēš*].9b.15bβ-17) and creation story motifs and references into the paradise materials (e. g., 2,8bβ; 3,1aβγ.12bα.19aβb.23b). In addition to all this, the Yahwist appears to have elaborated the received traditions using yet other traditions or creative imagination. Such elaboration is evident in the link between the stories provided in 2,25. The appearance of the snake as seducer, the appearance of the woman in the seduction scene, and the curses in 3,14-19, to mention a few major elements, may also be part of this elaboration.

While it is difficult to sort out the development of the paradise materials in Genesis 2-3 — and is not necessary to do this here given the specific goal of this study — something can and should be said about the scope of the early paradise story that was either taken up by the Yahwist or which underlies the version of the paradise story the Yahwist took up. There is good reason to suppose that this early story involved only a single human, a man<sup>(65)</sup>. This is suggested

<sup>(63)</sup> On the man's discernment in naming the animals, see G. W. RAMSEY, "Is Name-Giving an Act of Domination in Genesis 2:23 and Elsewhere?", *CBQ* 50 (1988) 34-35.

<sup>(64)</sup> Gen 3,21 may have a similar tenor and may belong to the creation tradition.

<sup>(65)</sup> BEGRICH, "Paradieserzählung", 108-115; J. L. MCKENZIE, "Mythological Allusions in Ezek 28:12-18", *JBL* 75 (1956) 326; RUPPERT, "Sündenfallerzählung", 188-195; SCHMIDT, *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 222-223; STECK, "Paradieserzählung", 37-44 (orig. 42-50); WESTERMANN, *Genesis 1-11*, 265-266.

internally by the prohibition of eating, which is given to the man alone (2,16-17), and the inconsistency created when the woman knows of this prohibition later in the story (3,2-3). It is also suggested by the man's being the sole object of expulsion from the garden (vv. 23-24)<sup>(66)</sup>. This surmise is strongly supported, and even independently determinable, by a comparison of Ezek 28,11-19, which, as noted above, is the closest parallel to Genesis 2-3. In this version only a man appears. O.H. Steck has argued that in reconstructing the early paradise story, or at least in identifying its motifs, one should focus on only those elements that *must* be part of the story — i.e., its minimal features — rather than on what *might* have been part of the story<sup>(67)</sup>. His guarded estimate provides a sound basis for analysis here. The elements he includes are: a first man created by the deity; a garden called the Garden of Eden; the conception of the garden as the "Park der Gottheit"; the man's residence in the garden; a tree in the middle of the garden; the man's expulsion from the garden as the result of something to do with the tree and therefore perhaps also the prohibition of eating in 2,16-17 (but not including the death penalty because the penalty is expulsion); and the guarding of the tree by the *kerûbîm*.

The evidences for the garden's holiness and human impurity there correlate with this general critical assessment of the composition of Genesis 2-3: the theme of the garden's holiness derives from the paradise tradition, and the sexual function of the couple and their mortality derives from the creation tradition. Observe that the core of the evidence for the garden's holiness is found in the supposed paradise story that involves a single man as hypothesized by Steck: the deity's presence in the garden; his ownership of the garden; the protection of the garden; and the motifs of *kerûbîm* and a tree. The connection of the garden's holiness with the paradise tradition is confirmed by Ezek 28,11-19, which, as we have seen, exhibits clear evidence of the holiness of the deity's mountain or garden.

In the paradise story with just the man, impurity concerns presumably would not have played a significant role. Without a woman present, there would be no sexual intercourse, menstruation,

<sup>(66)</sup> For objections to this evidence, see KUTSCH, "Paradieserzählung", 21-22.

<sup>(67)</sup> STECK, "Paradieserzählung", 39-40 (orig. 44-46).

or childbirth. Thus the manifestation of impurity, and therefore concerns about it, would be minimal. Only seminal emissions might be of concern, but these could easily be ignored in view of the story's other interests. Death, moreover, may not have been a threat to the holy territory in this early formulation. Ezek 28,11-19 reads as if the man may have been able to live in the mountain-garden indefinitely until he sinned. And vv. 17-19 place the man's apparent death outside the holy domain's bounds (cf. 28,8.10), a hint that in the earlier form of the story death was not to occur inside the garden/mountain area<sup>(68)</sup>.

In contrast to the paradise story, the creation story, which, it must be remembered, is separable on grounds other than issues of holiness and impurity, has no interest in a *holy* garden, if in a garden at all. In this, much as in the P story of Genesis 1,1-2,4a (especially 1,28), the man and woman, when created, are sexually functional and liable to death, just as the animals are.

The blending of the two traditions created the contradiction observed in this paper. Interestingly, J did not seem concerned about resolving it even though impurity posed a threat to the sacred according to J thought elsewhere, as has been noted. In fact, J not only let the contradiction stand, but even appears to have exacerbated it by elaborating each of the two themes. The punishment of painful pregnancy in Gen 3,16 as well as the contextual sense of the death penalty in 2,17 — evidences of the pair's sexual activity and mortality, as explained above — are by all appearances the result of J's creative embellishment when joining the traditions. At the same time, the man's working and guarding, the deity's walking about (*hithallēk*), and the east entrance of the Garden of Eden — evidences of the holiness of the garden — also appear to be part of this creative reworking.

(68) All this assumes that those who produced the earlier version recognized sexual discharges and human corpses as impure and considered them a threat to what is holy. Too, if the MT reading in Ezek 28,14.16, which identifies the individual as the *kerûb*, is correct (cf. note 15, above) and reflects motifs of an earlier paradise story, then the individual is divine, and presumably immortal and nonsexual (or not sexual in a human way). The issues of impurity would therefore not arise.

J may have resisted systematic integration of the conflicting themes because of constraints that the received traditions imposed: the holiness of the garden could not be denied, but making the first humans immortal or asexual was not a viable or imaginable solution. J may have also maintained the conflicting themes because of its own contextual demands and interests. Its cycle of primeval tales charts the early history of humanity. This requires at least a man and woman to start the human line, and to do this that they be normal reproductive human beings. If they are normal, they presumably should also be mortal. At the same time, the tales are not infrequently interested in cultic matters. This concern may have provided a reason for preserving the garden holiness.

Dept. of Near Eastern  
and Judaic Studies  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, MA 02254 USA

David P. WRIGHT

## Wisdom False and True (Sir 19,20-30)

The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira, like the older Book of Proverbs, professes a passionate love for Wisdom: her attraction is like the allure of a beautiful woman, exciting a desire just as powerful and demanding (Sir 6,18-31; 51,13-21; cf. Prov 4,5-9)<sup>(1)</sup>. Wisdom can be vaunted by Ben Sira as the supreme value, because it encompasses fear of the Lord and keeping of the Law (Sir 1,11-30)<sup>(2)</sup>. Wisdom leads to all that is good in life (11,17; 40,18-27; 51,27-28; cf. Prov 8,18-21). Because of Ben Sira's passion for Wisdom, it is not surprising to find him aroused to anger by anything that threatens to confuse or sully his ideal. Especially problematic is the ambiguity of wisdom as a concept, since the term *hōkmâ* can encompass both the Wisdom born of commitment to the divine plan for humankind revealed in the Law (1,26-27; 24,23-29) and the facility of an experienced, trained, and agile mind, regardless of its moral orientation (Exod 1,10; 35,26; 2Sam 20,22; 1Kgs 2,6; Prov 11,30; Job 5,13; Isa 10,13). Certainly, Ben Sira, as a highly educated professional scribe, valued the intellectual training he had received and was quick to extol its benefits (38,24; 39,1-11). Yet Ben Sira recognized another type of intellectual achievement that is hardly to be recommended: "There is a wisdom that is an abomination" (19,23a), namely, a facility in using the mind to achieve wicked ends.

Thus, Ben Sira is anxious in 19,20-30 to clarify the relationship between the two kinds of wisdom. Ideally, they should complement each other, but if one is to be lacking, let it not be the *yir'at yhw* that is the sum of true Wisdom (*kōl hōkmâ yir'at yhw*, 19,20). The relationship between the two kinds of wisdom is shown in graphic form below, with three of the combinations appearing in the poem: WISE/*wise* (vv. 29-30), WISE/*simple* (vv. 23b-24a), and SINFUL/*wise* (vv. 24b,25b-28).

(<sup>1</sup>) All citations from the Wisdom of Ben Sira follow the verse numbers of J. Ziegler's edition of the LXX (*Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* [Septuaginta 12/2; Göttingen 1965]).

(<sup>2</sup>) P. W. SKEHAN-A. A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York 1987) 75-80.

	WISE	SINFUL
	"fear God" (19,24a)	"break the Law" (19,24b)
<i>wise</i>	WISE/ <i>wise</i>	SINFUL/ <i>wise</i>
"have plenty of knowledge" (19,24b)	"the person of intelligence" (19,29-30)	"the depths of his heart are full of guile" (19,25b-28)
<i>simple</i>	WISE/ <i>simple</i>	SINFUL/ <i>simple</i>
"to lack knowledge" (19,24a)	"a simpleton free from sin" (19,23b)	"If I sin, his eye will not see: Fools think this way". (16,21a.23a)

### I. The Text of Ben Sira 19,20-30

Unfortunately, Sir 19,20-30 is among the 32% of the work no longer extant in Hebrew (H). Witnesses to the text include two Greek versions (GI and GII), the Syriac Peshitta (S), and the Old Latin (OL)<sup>(3)</sup>. These versions contain numerous variants, but the original sense of the poem can be recovered with confidence in almost every case except for a few doubtful words that have little impact on the interpretation of the poem<sup>(4)</sup>. However, to appreciate Ben Sira's poetic achievement, it is necessary to recover not only the general sense of the poem, which can be expressed to some degree in any language, but its form, which is bound to the original H. In attempting to recover the H, one is assisted by the generally consistent translation practice of the major versions (GI and S). These versions generally: 1. preserve the line structure of the poem (GI more so than S); 2. preserve H word order; 3. render H grammatical forms by recognizable correspondents (GI more so than S); and 4. frequently demonstrate lexical consistency in translating H words.

In working with a text no longer extant in the original H, the scholar will constantly be concerned with what the original is

<sup>(3)</sup> In establishing the text of Sir 19,20-30, I have consulted J. Ziegler's edition of the LXX (1965) for Greek I and II; the *Biblia sacra* (1964) for the Old Latin (OL); the editions of Walton (1657), de Lagarde (1861), Ceriani (1876-83), and Mosul (1951) for the Syriac (S); and the edition of Ceriani (1874) for the Syrohexaplar (Syh), which is a witness to the GII text.

<sup>(4)</sup> Doubtful words include GI *akribēs* or S *wšb* in v. 25a (see n. 10 below) and GI *melania* or S *w'yk tbr npš* in v. 26a (see n. 33 below).

likely to have been. It seems to me that retroversion of the text is inevitable, whether the process is openly acknowledged or remains tacit. At a minimum, a retroversion can economically display H word order and grammatical structures, which can be reconstructed with considerable confidence, information critical to the poetic analysis of the poem, even though lexical issues sometimes remain doubtful. The retroversion can also suggest the concision of the original H, a quality not apparent in the more diffuse G and S.

In addressing lexical issues in the retroversion below, the H will appear as normal text if GI or S demonstrates a consistent translation practice, defined as a situation where a G or S word represents the same H word in at least 2/3 of cases. Instances where the H has special significance for interpretation, but where the retroversion is less certain, are given in italics; the textual problems involved with these words will be discussed in the body of the text below or in notes. GI and S words for which no consistent translation practice exists and for which the H form is less critical for interpretation are given in English. It should be noted that recovery of the H vocabulary is important chiefly for recovering the sound patterns of the poem, which seemingly had considerable significance for its impact. Most other aspects of poetic analysis are based on the H word order and grammatical structures, which can be reconstructed more securely.

The letters after each colon below indicate the colon's syntactic structure, whether a simple nominal sentence (N), nominal sentence with existential particle (E), correlative nominal sentence (C), nominal sentence with participle or verbal adjective as subject (P), or verbal sentence (V).

A 20	kōl ḥōkmâ yir'at yhwh (N)	Prov 1,7; Job 28,28
	wēkōl ḥōkmâ 'āsôt tôrâ (N)	24,22-27; Deut 4,6
22	'ên ḥōkmâ da'at ra' (râ'â) (E)	
	wē'ên 'āṣat <sup>(5)</sup> [sinners] <sup>(6)</sup> šekel (E)	Ps 1,1

<sup>(5)</sup> The equivalence *boulē* = S *tr'yt* = H 'āṣat is found at 47,23. GI *boulē* = H 'ēṣâ (4/8 times: 30,21; 35,19; 37,13; 47,23; see also Ps 1,1). R. SMEND, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt* (Berlin 1906) 177, also reads 'āṣat.

<sup>(6)</sup> It is unclear which H synonym for "sinners" should be read since both GI *hamartōloi* and S ḥṭy' translate a variety of H words.



- B 23 *yēš ḥōkmā wēhīʾ tōʿēbā* (E) Prov 11,30; Job 5,13  
*wēyēš sākal ḥāsar* [sins] <sup>(7)</sup> (E)
- 24 *ṭōb ḥāsar maddaʿ* [fearing God] <sup>(8)</sup> (C) Prov 7,7; 9,4  
*mēyōtēr maddaʿ* [transgressing the law] <sup>(9)</sup> (C) Sir 10,19
- 25 *yēš* [slyness settled] <sup>(10)</sup> *wēhīʾ* [deception] <sup>(11)</sup> (E)  
*wēyēš* [who acts crookedly] <sup>(12)</sup> *lēgallōt mišpāt* (E/P) Job 8,3; 1 Sam 8,3
- C 26 *yēš mēhallēk bēnaḥat mēšubbar bēnepeš* (E/P) Luke 24,17; Job 9,27 LXX  
*ūbētōk libbō mēlēʾ nēkel* (P) Matt 23,27-28
- 27 *maṭṭē pānāyw ūmahārīš* (P) Pss 45,3; 39,3.10  
*ūbēmāqōm* <sup>(13)</sup> *lōʾ nōdāʿ qērāʾāk* (V) Sir 12,17a; Deut 25,18

<sup>(7)</sup> It is unclear which H synonym for “sins” is translated by GI *ponēria* = S *ḥṭhʾ*. S *ḥṭhʾ* translates: ‘*āwōn*, 7x; *ḥēṭʾ/ḥaṭṭāʾ*t, 5x; *pešaʿ*, 3x; and *ḥāmās*, 2x. On the other hand, GI *ponēria* always translates derivatives of H root *rʿc*.

<sup>(8)</sup> S has extensively rewritten v. 24a to harmonize with v. 23b. The GI reading *emphobos* is hapax for this version. One may surmise that GI possessed a defective H *Vorlage* and restore *yārēʾ ʾēlōhīm* or *yārēʾ yhwḥ*, which are both regularly translated by GI as *phoboumenos kyrion* (6,16; 10,20; 15,1.13.19; 26,3; 35,16; 36,1).

<sup>(9)</sup> One should read with GI, *parabainon nomon*, rather than with S *dḥṭʾ*, which is a harmonization with this translation’s overfrequent use of *ḥṭʾ* in the poem (see vv. 22b.23ab.24b.28a). See H Sir 10,19 where *yērēʾ ʾēlōhīm* stands in antithetic parallelism to ‘*ōbēr mišwā*’.

<sup>(10)</sup> GI *panourgia* and S *dʿrym* suggest a H synonym for evil cleverness, perhaps H ‘*ormā*: cf. GI *panourgos esē* = S *thwʾ ʿrym* = H *taʿarēm* (6,32b). GI indicates that the predicate noun is accompanied by an attributive adjective. H *yaššibā*, “firm” (Jastrow, 588b), is a reading capable of explaining both GI *akribēs* and S *wšbʾ*. If *yaššibā* were written defectively in the *Vorlage*, the S translator might have misunderstood H *yšbh* as a qal imperfect of *yšbh*. This would be a naive error since the root *yšbʾ* (“to desire”), while common in S, is not used in H. SMEND, *Die Weisheit Jesus Sirach erklärt*, 178, suggested *šānūaʿ* (“careful”), the qal passive participle of *šnʿ*. H *šānūaʿ* appears twice elsewhere in H Ben Sira (34,22; 42,8) and derivatives of H *šnʿ* most frequently underlie forms of the G *akrib-* (2/2: 16,25; 35,3b).

<sup>(11)</sup> S *lmdglw* calls for a H *Vorlage* meaning “to lie, deceive”, and GI *adikos* permits such a reconstruction. However, because Ben Sira uses a great variety of words to refer to lies and deception, it remains uncertain which one should be restored here.

<sup>(12)</sup> The syntactic structure of S suggests a participle followed by a complementary infinitive and GI permits the structure. S ‘*qm* is hapax; and GI *diastrephein* appears only 4 times; there is no consistent translation practice for either verb.

<sup>(13)</sup> S ‘*trʾ* = H *māqōm* (5/10 times: 4,5; 13,22; 35,4; 38,12, 42,11). See the equivalence GI *hopou* = S *bʾtr* = H *bēmāqōm* in 35,4.

- 28 wē'im mēḥāsar<sup>(14)</sup> kōaḥ yimmāna<sup>c</sup> mē [sin]<sup>(15)</sup> (V) Lam 1,6; Num 22,16  
 'im māšā<sup>c</sup> 'ēt yārēa<sup>c</sup> rā'ā (V) 2 Kgs 5,26
- D 29 mimmar<sup>c</sup>ēh [is distinguished]<sup>(16)</sup> 'iš (V) Lam 4,8  
 ūminneged pānāyw yiwwāda<sup>c</sup> mēbîn<sup>(17)</sup> (V)
- 30 [the clothing]<sup>(18)</sup> 'iš [and the smile of his teeth]<sup>(19)</sup> (V) Ahikar 2,39  
 wēhaššē'ādē 'ādām<sup>(20)</sup> [tell]<sup>(21)</sup> 'ālāyw

<sup>(14)</sup> See *ḥāsar kōaḥ* at 11,12. The GI reading *elattōma* has no H equivalent, but the synonymous *elattōsis* translates three H words: *ma'sôr*, 1x; *maḥsôr*, 1x; and *ḥāsēr*, 1x. Since only *ḥāsēr* is used in the construct relationship by H Ben Sira (30,4; 32,12), it should be tentatively preferred here. GI verbs from the root *elatto-* also usually translate *ḥāsēr* (6/9 times: 16,23; 34,27,30; 38,24; 41,2; 47,23). Although S agrees generally with GI in meaning, the syntax is typical of S rather than H.

<sup>(15)</sup> It is unclear which synonym for “sin” should be read here because GI *hamartanein* and S *ḥṭ'* translate a variety of H words.

<sup>(16)</sup> GI has *epiginōskein* in both cola of v. 29, but different verbs in S (*prš*, *yḏ'*) suggest different verbs in H. It is difficult to know which verb is represented by S *prš*, but perhaps the niphal of *bdl*.

<sup>(17)</sup> S *ḥkym* most frequently translates H *ḥākām* (16/31 times), but H *ḥākām* should be rejected because it is usually translated in GI by *sophos* or a related expression such as *anēr sophos*. The GI reading *noēmos*, unusual for this version (2x), suggests something other than *ḥākām* here. One should reject Segal's retroversion, H *maškīl*, because *maškīl* is typically used as an adjective in surviving H Ben Sira, not as a substantive (7,19,21; 10,23,25; 13,22; 25,8; 40,23; 47,12). S *ḥkym* also translates H *mēbîn* (10,1; 36,24; 38,4) and H *nābôn* (7,25). Either produces alliteration in the colon and is preferable as more ethically neutral than H *ḥākām*, but read *mēbîn* as more common in extant H Ben Sira.

<sup>(18)</sup> The syntactic structure of GI and S diverge significantly in v. 30, with S apparently reshaping the bicolon to bring it into conformity with Ben Sira's ordinary syntactic pattern, subject:verb::subject:verb. S rewrites the colon based on v. 29, reflecting his propensity for generating one colon from another (see vv. 20b,24a,27a). In contrast, GI witnesses an unusual situation where substantives spill over from the first colon to a paired colon (cf. Sir 45,10-11). GI hapax *stolismos* has no H correspondent, but the most frequent term for clothing in H Ben Sira is *begeḏ*, 9x.

<sup>(19)</sup> G *gelōs* has no correspondent in surviving H Ben Sira. One should recognize that cheerfulness is a prominent characteristic of the wise for Ben Sira (13,25-26; 30,21-24; 33,13b), even if the fool giggles too much (21,20).

<sup>(20)</sup> H *ngd* appears in a construction like the one required here in 11,27: *wēsōp 'ādām yaggīd 'ālāyw*.

<sup>(21)</sup> When GI has *anthrōpos* and S has *bar 'nasa'*, then H most frequently has *'ādām* (11/23 times), as well as H *'iš*, 6x; *'ēnōš*, 4x; *'ānāšīm*, 2x. Restore H *'ādām* because GI and S reflect a poetic contrast with *'iš* of the preceding colon.

- A 20 All wisdom is the fear of Yhwh,  
and in all wisdom there is performance of the Law.
- 22 Wisdom is not wicked know-how;  
nor is the sinners' plot prudence.
- B 23 There is a wisdom that is an abomination;  
but there is a simpleton free from sin.
- 24 Better to lack knowledge and fear God  
than to have plenty of knowledge and break the Law.
- 25 There is a settled slyness that is deception itself;  
and there is one who acts crookedly to turn up a good verdict.
- C 26 There is one going around bowed down, broken in spirit,  
but the depths of his heart are full of guile.
- 27 Long of face, with nothing to say;  
but in an unexpected place, he attacks you.
- 28 And if by debility he is prevented from sinning,  
if he gets the chance, he will do harm.
- D 29 From the appearance, a man is distinguished;  
and from the face, the person of intelligence is known.
- 30 A person's clothing, broad smile,  
and his way of walking tell about him.

Below is a brief justification for the retrojection of words for which a consistent translation practice exists.

v. 20 *kōl*: GI *pas* = H *kōl* (40/53 times).

*hōkmâ*: When GI has *sophia* and S has *hkm̄t*, H reads *hōkmâ* 10/12 times: 4,23.24; 6,18; 11,1; 14,20; 15,18; 38,24; 42,21; 45,26; 51,30 [colophon]).

*yir'at yhwh*: When GI has *phobos kyriou* and S has *dhlth d'lh'* or *dhlth dmry'*, H reads *yir'at yhwh* or *yir'at 'ēlōhīm* (6/6 times: 9,16; 10,22; 16,2; 40,26.27; 50,29). Note that GI invariably levels the divine title to *kyrios*, while S tends to level to *'lh'*. Thus, the appearance of the less common S *mry'* in Mosul, Ceriani, and Walton suggests reading H *yhwh* here.

*tôrâ*: GI *nomos* = H *tôrâ* (9/12 times: 15,1; 35,15.24; 36,2.3; 41,8; 42,2; 45,5; 49,4).

v. 22 *'ên*: When GI has *ouk estin* and S has *lyt*, H reads *'ên* (25/26 times).

See *hōkmâ*, v. 20.

*ra'*: GI *ponēria* always translates a derivative of the H root *r'c* (*ra'*, 3x; *rā'â*, 4x; *rōa'*, 3x). One should prefer *ra'* or *rā'â* because of their *a*-assonance with *hōkmâ* and *da'at*.

- v. 23 *yēš*: When GI has *estin* and S has <sup>ʿ</sup>*yt*, then H reads *yēš* (18/22 times).  
*wēhī*: GI *kai hautē*. S *bry* (‘‘creates’’) seems to misunderstand H *hy* as a hiphil of *hyh*.  
*tô<sup>ʿ</sup>ēbâ*: GI *bdelygma* = H *tô<sup>ʿ</sup>ēbâ* (4/5 times: 13,20[bis]; 15,13; 49,2).  
*ḥāsar*: Where GI has a verb derived from the stem *elatto-* and S has *ḥsy*, H reads *ḥāsēr* (5/5 times: 16,23; 34,27.30; 41,2; 47,23).  
v. 24 *ṭōb ... min*: GI *kreissōn* = H *ṭōb ... min* (9/10 times: 10,27; 16,3; 30,14.17.30; 40,28; 41,15; 42,14).  
*ḥāsar*: S *ḥsy* = *ḥāsar* (6/7 times: 6,20; 11,12; 16,23; 34,27; 41,2; 47,23). R. Smend reads *ḥāsar madda<sup>ʿ</sup>* (22).  
*madda<sup>ʿ</sup>*: S *mā<sup>ʿ</sup>* = H *madda<sup>ʿ</sup>* (2/2 times: 3,13; 13,8). See GI *synesis* || S *mā<sup>ʿ</sup>* || H *madda<sup>ʿ</sup>* (3,13).  
*yôtēr*: Where GI has *perisseuein* and S *ytyr*, H reads *yôtēr* (2/2 times: 10,27; 11,12). Smend read *yôtēr madda<sup>ʿ</sup>* (23).  
v. 25 See *yēš*, *wēhī*, v. 23.  
*lēgallôt*: Both GI and S suggest an infinitive. S *peal gl<sup>p</sup>* = H *glh* (4/6 times: 4,18; 8,19; 12,11; 42,19). See GI *ekphainein* = S *gl<sup>p</sup>* = H *glh* (8,19). Smend reads H *glh* (24).  
*mišpāt*: When GI has *krima* and S *dyn<sup>ʿ</sup>*, H reads *mišpāt* (4/5 times: 20,4; 35,16; 45,5.17). Also, S *dyn<sup>ʿ</sup>* = H *mišpāt* (7/10 times: 4,9; 32,15.22; 35,16; 39,29; 45,5.17). Smend reads *mišpāt* (25).  
v. 26 See *yēš*, v. 23.  
*bētōk*: S *gw* = H *tāwek* (3/5 times: 11,8; 15,5; 48,17). Cf. the similar expression in S 1,30 (*wgwh dlbk m<sup>p</sup> nk<sup>p</sup>*). In each case, the GI simplifies the expression in a different way: *kai hē kardia sou plērēs dolou* (1,30); *kai ta entos autou plērēs dolou* (19,26).  
*lēb*: S *lēb* = H *lēb* (45/53 times) and H *lēbāb* (6/53 times). Smend supports H *lēb* (26).  
*mēlē*: GI *plērēs* = H *m<sup>p</sup>* (2/2 times: 42,16; 50,6). S *m<sup>p</sup>* = H *m<sup>p</sup>* (4/8 times: 4,17; 30,25; 36,19; 37,3).  
*nēkel*: S *nk<sup>p</sup>* = H *nk<sup>l</sup>* (1/2 times: 5,8). The resemblance of S 19,26b (*wgw lbh m<sup>p</sup> nk<sup>p</sup>*) to S 1,30f (*wgwh dlbk m<sup>p</sup> nk<sup>p</sup>*) suggests a consistent vocabulary here, most probably H *nēkel*.

(22) SMEND, *Die Weisheit Jesus Sirach erklärt*, 178.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Ibid.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Ibid.

- v. 27 *maṭṭê pānāyw*: Both GI and S suggest a participle followed by direct object. S *rkn* = H *nṭh* (2/3 times: 4,8a; 6,23). When GI has *prosōpon* and S has *ʾpʾ*, then H reads *pānīm* (9/9 times: 7,24; 12,18; 13,25.26; 25,17; 32,11.15; 34,13; 36,27).
- lōʾ nōdāʿ*: S *ydʿ* = H *ydʿ* (22/26 times). Also, when GI has *epiginōskein* and S has *ydʿ*, then H reads *ydʿ* (3/4 times: 9,13; 33,5[bis]).
- v. 28 *wēʿim min*: GI *hypo* = H *min* (4/6 times: 7,15; 13,21[bis]; 48,12).
- kōah*: S *hyʾ* = H *kōah* (5/6 times: 5,2; 9,14; 34,30; 38,5; 44,6). See *ḥāsar kōah*, H 11,12.
- yimmānaʿ*: S *kʾ* = H *mnʿ* (7/11 times: 4,3.23; 7,21.33; 12,7; 14,4.14). H *mnʿ* appears twice in the kind of syntactical construction demanded here: *mnʿ* + *min* + infinitive (4,3; 41,19).
- ʾim māšāʾ ʿēt*: Where GI has *heuriskein* and S aphel *škḥ*, then H reads *mšʾ* (19/24 times). Also, GI *kairos* = H *ʿēt* (27/33 times). See H 12,16d: *ʾim māšāʾ ʿēt lōʾ yišbaʿ dām*.
- yārēaʿ rāʿā*: S aphel *bʾš* = H hiphil *rʿʿ* (2/3 times: 34,10; 38,21). Cf. 34,10; where S has misunderstood H consonantal *rʿh* as H *rēʿeh*, “companion”: H *ûlēharēaʿ rāʿā* = GI *kai poiēsai kaka*; S *wlmbʾšw ḥbrh*. Similarly, in 19,28b, S has misunderstood H consonantal *rʿh* as a second verbal form rather than as a cognate accusative (S *lmbʾšw mbʾš*).
- v. 29 *mimmarʾēh*: When GI has *horasis* and S *ḥzwʾ*, then H reads *marʾeh* (2/2 times: 11,2; 49,8).
- ʾîš*: S *gbrʾ* = H *ʾîš* (25/35 times).
- minneged*: S *mn qbwʾ* = H *minneged* (2/2 times: 37,4.9).
- pānāyw*: It is difficult to say where H *pānāyw* should be located: S reads it in v. 29a, GI in v. 29b. It may have been present in both cola, but its presence seems to be required in v. 29b by *neged* in v. 29b. Here, it also functions as a poetic development of the simpler expression of v. 29a. Smend places *pānāyw* here<sup>(27)</sup>.
- yiwwādaʿ*: S *ydʿ* = H *ydʿ* (22/26 times). Also, when GI has *epiginōskein* and S has *ydʿ*, then H reads *ydʿ* (3/4 times: 9,13; 33,5[bis]). Cf. 12,8, a verse similar in vocabulary, syntax, and thought to the present one: *lōʾ yiwwādaʿ bēṭôbâ ʾôhēb || wēlōʾ yēkussēh bēṭāʿâ sônēʾ*, “A friend cannot be known in good times, but an enemy will not stay hidden in bad”.

(27) Ibid., 179.

v. 30 <sup>ʾiṣ</sup>: When GI has *anēr* and S has *gbr*<sup>3</sup>, then H reads <sup>ʾiṣ</sup> (10/15 times: 9,18; 12,9.14; 14,2; 21,23; 34,20; 40,29[bis]; 41,1; 44,23).

<sup>ṣē</sup>*ādē*: GI *bēma* = H <sup>ṣē</sup>*ādīm* “steps” (1/1: 45,9). S *ps*<sup>c</sup> “to step” = H <sup>ṣ</sup>*d* “to step” (1/1: 9,13).

<sup>ʿālāyw</sup>: When GI has *peri* and S has <sup>ʿ</sup>*l*, H reads <sup>ʿāl</sup> (6/8 times: 5,5; 13,12; 16,8; 37,11; 41,12; 45,23). See the similar construction in 11,27: *wēsôp* <sup>ʾādām</sup> *yaggîd* <sup>ʿālāyw</sup>.

## II. Poetic Analysis and Exegesis

### 1. Context

The poem is related even more tenuously to its context than is usual for the heterogenous Ben Sira. The poem's primary concern is to distinguish the cleverness of the wicked from the greater Wisdom that is fear of God and adherence to the Law. Obviously, the clever but wicked person is a natural enemy. Thus, the poem has many resemblances to passages that deal with the discernment of friend from foe and prudence in dealing with the latter (11,29-34; 12,8-18). The placement of the poem in its present context may have been prompted by 19,13-17, which deals with suspect behavior on the part of a friend calling for investigation and rebuke before a possible rupture as though with an enemy (19,17a). The two verses immediately following the poem return to the theme of the administration of rebukes, which may be seen as a logical consequence of the discernment between good and evil called for by the passage.

### 2. Overall Structure

All interpreters agree that three bicola witnessed only in GII (19,18-19.22), should be eliminated as a late addition<sup>(28)</sup>. After this excision, the poem may be symmetrically divided into two sections and four strophes, containing respectively 2, 3, 3, and 2 bicola. Section I (vv. 20-25) focuses primarily on wisdom as a concept, with Strophe A emphasizing the Wisdom that is *yir*<sup>ʾ</sup>at *yhwh* and <sup>ʿ</sup>*āsôt tôrâ* (v. 20), and Strophe B emphasizing the wisdom that is human adroitness (*yôtēr madda*<sup>c</sup>) placed at the service of evil (“break the law”, v. 25a). Section II (vv. 26-30) describes two sorts of people:

<sup>(28)</sup> SKEHAN-DI LELLA, *Ben Sira*, 298.

the clever but wicked man (SINFUL/wise) in Strophe C and the intelligent and good man (WISE/wise) in Strophe D. Thus, the four strophes form both a repeating structure,  $a:a'::b:b'$  (concept of Wisdom:concept of "wisdom"::type of person [SINFUL/wise]:type of person [WISE/wise]), as well as a chiasmic structure,  $ab::b'a'$  (good:evil::evil:good)<sup>(29)</sup>. Another pattern in the poem, loosely related to strophic structure, is a progression in sentence structure: vv. 20-27a are nominal sentences, with existential particles clustered in vv. 22-26a and participles clustered in vv. 25b-27a, while only vv. 27b-30 contain finite verbs (see further discussion of the poetic significance of this progression in sentence structure below).

### 3. *Strophe A* (vv. 20-22)

The first line of Strophe A gives a formal definition of true Wisdom, condensing even further the programmatic declaration of the opening chapter, *sophia gar kai paideia phobos kyriou* (1,27a), into *kōl ḥōkmâ yir'at yhwḥ* (19,20a). Although, the occurrence of *poiēsis nomou* in the next colon has no exact parallel in extant H Ben Sira, it is reminiscent of H Ben Sira 15,1, where 'śh is associated with *tôrâ* in successive bicola: (*kî yērē' yhwḥ ya'āšeh zō't / wētôpēs tôrâ yadrîkennâ*). 2 Chr 14,13 provides a parallel, *la'āsôt hattôrâ*, derived from Deuteronomic language (Deut 28,58; 29,28; Jos 1,7; 22,5), but the definite article should be omitted since Ben Sira avoids it in other occurrences of absolute *tôrâ*. For the use of a construct

<sup>(29)</sup> The strophic structure proposed here agrees with that advocated by R. SMEND, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, hebräisch und deutsch* (Berlin 1906) 32-33. M. H. SEGAL, *Seper ben-Sira' hassalem* (Jerusalem 1958) 117, does not subdivide the first half of the poem (vv. 20-25) but recognizes Strophes C and D (vv. 26-28,29-30). N. PETERS, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus* (EHAT 25; Münster 1913) 160, divides the poem into five strophes: vv. 20-22 (true wisdom is joined with fear of God), vv.23-24 (stupidity itself is better than false, sinful "wisdom"), vv. 25-26 (false sages are described), vv. 27-28 (they feign helplessness, but their sins and endeavors are for evil), and vv. 29-30 (one recognizes them from their outward appearance and guards against them). For another symmetrically structured poem see Sir 10,10–11,6, analyzed by A. A. DI LELLA, "Sirach 10:19–11:6: Textual Criticism, Poetic Analysis, and Exegesis", *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. C. L. MEYERS–M. O'CONNOR) (Winona Lake, IN 1983) 157-163.

infinitive as a substantive without preposition *l-* in H Ben Sira, see 38,11 and 41,19-22.

After positively stating in v. 20 what Wisdom is, Ben Sira states what it is not (v. 22a): Wisdom is not wicked know-how, and the sinners' plot is not prudence. Even without a full reconstruction of the H, one may recognize that the word order of Strophe A is doubly symmetrical: v. 20 has a repeating structure, a:b::a:b' (all wisdom:fear of the Lord::and all wisdom:doing of the Law), while v. 22 has a partially chiasmic syntactic arrangement, a:b:c::a:c':b' (*'ên*:noun:construct phrase::'*ên*:construct phrase:noun); as well as a partially chiasmic sense arrangement, a:b:c::a:c:b (*'ên*:good:evil::'*ên*:evil:good). Likewise, the a-cola of the strophe have a partially repeating structure, a:b::(c):a:b (all wisdom:construct phrase::[*'ên*]:wisdom:construct phrase), while the b-cola have a chiasmic arrangement, a:b::(c):b':a' (noun:construct phrase::wē'*ên*:construct phrase:noun).

However, the poetic analysis of Strophe A would be greatly enhanced by a recovery of the original H vocabulary, because significant sound patterns may have once existed in these verses. The greatest difficulties lie in determining the H lying behind GI *epistēmē* and *phronēsis* (19,22). Although GI *epistēmē* translates a number of words in H Ben Sira (*šekel*, 4x; *da'at*, 1x; *dēa'*, 1x; *bînâ*, 1x; *tēbûnâ*, 1x), one should reconstruct H *da'at ra'* or *dēa' ra'*. Either reading can explain the shorter S reading, *lyt ħkym' dbyš*, as a haplography in the H *Vorlage* used by S, triggered by the resemblance of H *resh* and *daleth*. The reading *da'at ra'* is preferable for its greater sonant resemblance to H *ḥōkmâ* in the same colon (a-asonance). One should reject Segal's addition of the definite article (*hārā'*), because Ben Sira never employs the definite article with *ra'* in 31 occurrences.

Unfortunately, no instance of the H underlying any occurrence of GI *phronēsis* (v. 22b) has been preserved. Curiously, derivatives of S *skl* are never used elsewhere to translate H *šekel*; in contrast, derivatives of *skl* most frequently translate H *tēbûnâ* (3/4 times: 4,24; 14,20; 15,3). Thus, on the basis of translation practice, the most likely retroversion is H *tēbûnâ*, which shares an end rhyme with *ḥōkmâ*. However, in translating v. 22b, S may depart from usual practice to preserve a paradoxical H wordplay involving *šekel* and *sākāl* ("prudence" and "simpleton") in successive bicola (vv. 22b.23b; S *skwltny'/skl'*). Furthermore, reading H *šekel* creates sibilant-alliteration with *ʿāṣat* in the same colon.



If the reconstruction is correct, then vv. 20.22 are full of expressions for good and evil with a sonant resemblance, most strikingly between subjects and predicate complements in vv. 22: *ḥōkmâ/da'at ra'*, *'āṣat* [sinners]/*śekel*. In a similar fashion, the opposition between rival programs for life (*'āšôt tôrâ/'āṣat* [sinners], vv. 20b.22b) gains added poignancy through their sonant similarity. If the reconstruction is correct, then the H text implies that, although good and evil may sound alike, they are not same thing (*'ên*, 2x), reinforcing the primary theme of the poem, the need to distinguish between true and false wisdom. Thus, although the poem nowhere explicitly declares that it is easy to confuse good and evil, or easy to pass off evil as good, yet the suggestion is made by these sonant similarities. This interpretation is supported by the focus of the poem's second half on describing the outward signs by which one may distinguish the wicked from the person of true intelligence (vv. 26-30).

One should make note of the strong ties between v. 22 and the following strophe (vv. 23-25), ties so strong that one might be tempted to include this verse in that strophe. V. 22b anticipates the discussion of evil wisdom, the main topic of Strophe B, and sinners make their first appearance in v. 22, to be considered at greater length in Strophes B and C. Both cola of v. 22 begin with the negative existential particle (*'ên*), while four of six cola of Strophe B begin with the positive existential particle (*yēš*). An echo (parechesis) may exist between *śekel/sākāl* (vv. 22b.23b). Like Strophe A, the opening line of Strophe B appears to have a sonant resemblance between its subject and predicate complement as an important rhetorical feature (*ḥōkmâ/tô'ēbâ*, cf. *ḥōkmâ/da'at ra'*; *'āṣat* [sinners]/*śekel* in v. 22).

Yet, because v. 22 remains closely linked to v. 20 as described above, and because Strophe B manifests a tightly delimited structure (described below), v. 22 should be assigned to Strophe A. One should recognize that characteristics shared by v. 22 with Strophe B function as anticipations and unifying factors between the two strophes, just as similar anticipations smooth the transition to Strophes C and D.

#### 4. *Strophe B* (vv. 23-25)

Strophe B reflects upon the use of human intelligence to achieve evil ends and condemns it with two types of statements arranged in a repeating pattern around a central statement (*a : b :: c :: a' : b'*).

Type A: Nominal sentences declaring evil wisdom to be an abomination and deception (vv. 23a.25a). These statements share a common structure:  $a:b:c:d::a:b':c:d'$  ( $yěš:hōkmā:wěhî:tô'ēbā::yěš:[slyness settled]:wěhî:[deception]$ ).

Type B: Nominal sentences beginning with the existential particle followed by subject that contrast the faithful but simple person with the clever, lawless man (vv. 23b.25b).

Type C: A correlative sentence asserting the superiority of ignorance with fear of God to intelligence with contempt for the Law (v. 24). This sentence has a repeating structure:  $a:b:c::a':b':c'$  ( $tōb:hāsar madda':[fearing God]:mē:yôtēr madda':[transgressing the law]$ ). This perfectly balanced epigram echoes Sir 10,19: "Which offspring are in honor? Those who fear God... Which offspring are in disgrace? Those who transgress the commandments" (NAB).

As with Strophe A, important issues of interpretation hinge on reconstructing the Hebrew. The GI reading *estin ponēria kai hautē bdelygma* in v. 23a is supported by the majority of GI MSS, OL and Syh, but makes little poetic sense, yielding only the truism: "There is evil that is an abomination". The flatness of this reading seemingly provoked an attempt at textual improvement through the substitution of *panourgia* for *ponēria* (inspired by 19,25a) in some G MSS (V-253 *L*<sup>248</sup> 130, adopted by J. Ziegler and A. Rahlfs). N. Peters makes the enlightening suggestion that *ponēria* and *sophia* have been transposed in v. 23ab, resulting in the innocuous statement cited above and the equally flat, "There is a simpleton lacking wisdom" (v. 23b)<sup>(30)</sup>. This transposition could have been a well-meaning scribal correction of a seemingly corrupt text or perhaps a deliberate suppression of the scandalous, "There is a wisdom that is an abomination" (v. 23a). The equation of *hōkmā* with *tô'ēbā* would continue the use of positive terms (such as *da'at* and *āṣat*, v. 22) to describe evil intelligence.

Note that the reversal of *ponēria* and *sophia* would bring the GI text substantially into line with the S, since these terms are close to the semantic range of S *'rymwt'* and *hṯh'*. If GI has suffered a transposition, then the obvious retroversion of GI *sophia* is H *hōkmā*. This emendation contributes to the poetic impact as well: in place of the insipid tautologies of unemended GI one finds a jolting paradox, which apparently contradicts the poem's opening

<sup>(30)</sup> PETERS, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 162.

statement, “ALL wisdom is the fear of Yhwh” (v.20a). However, from another perspective, the poem’s opening line has already negated in advance the assertion of v.23a, by leaving no room for any other sort of wisdom. The reversal also expands the brief appearance of the simple but faithful person to successive cola (vv. 23b-24a) as a foil for the person of wicked intelligence (vv. 24b-28).

In v.23b, GI *aphrōn* and S *skP* translate a variety of H words. One may tentatively prefer H *sākāl* because of the intensification of sibilant alliteration (*yēš sākāl ḥāsar*) and the possible echo (parechesis) with H *šekel* in the preceding verse (v.22b). On the basis of this reconstruction one may observe that the opening colon of Strophe B (v.23a) features a sonant resemblance between the subject and predicate complement (*ḥōkmâ/tô‘ēbâ*), echoing the resemblances in Strophe A (*ḥōkmâ/da‘at ra‘*; ‘*āṣat* [sinners]/*šekel*). However, unlike Strophe A, the kind of wisdom under discussion in v.23a both sounds like evil (*ḥōkmâ/tô‘ēbâ*) and is, in fact, evil (*yēš*). Along the same lines, the restoration of *šekel/sākāl* in vv. 22b,23b leads the reader to ponder the relationship between “prudence” and “simpleton”, which surprisingly turns out to be a relationship of identity.

##### 5. *Strophe C* (vv. 26-28)

In Strophe C, the clever schemer introduced in v.25b assumes center stage. Strophe C is linked to its predecessor by opening with the existential particle that dominates Strophe B, by an abundance of participles echoing vv. 24b,25b, by the appearance of synonyms for “guile” in both strophes (vv. 25a,26b), and by the probable appearance of *ḥāsar* in both strophes (vv. 23b,24a,28a). The last word for evil in the poem (*rā‘ā*) may echo the first (*ra‘*, vv. 22a,28b), indicating that the description of evil wisdom has come full circle and reached its completion in Strophe C.

The strophe has a clear structure, with the a-cola portraying the wicked person as apparently abased and pitiful while the b-cola assure readers that he remains full of malice and ready to do harm. A similar contrast of outward appearance with inward reality is also found in Ben Sira’s major poem on enemies (12,8-18, see esp. vv. 11ab,16,17b).

Because many of the phrases of Strophe C are relatively rare, it is seldom possible to reconstruct the H on the basis of consistent translation practice, but one can have confidence in reconstructing

some phrases because of the appearance of similar phraseology in Ben Sira's poem on enemies: i.e., *wihallēk bēnaḥat* (12,11a || 19,26a), and *qērā'āk*<sup>(31)</sup> (12,17a || 19,27b), and *māšā' ēt* (12,16d || 19,28b). Similarly, many of the terms used to describe the temporary abasement of the wicked are often applied to the afflicted just elsewhere in the OT. This use of traditional language helps to confirm the retroversion. See, e.g., *mēhallēk bēnaḥat*<sup>(32)</sup> (Job 9,27 [LXX]; Luke 24,17), *mēšubbar bēnepeš*<sup>(33)</sup> (Ps 34,19; Isa 61,1d; Matt 5,3); *maḥārīš*<sup>(34)</sup> (Pss 32,3; 38,14; 39,3.10; Isa 42,14; 53,7) *ḥāsar kōah* (Sir 11,12; Job 26,2; Jer 48,45; Lam 1,6). Once more, Ben Sira plays with the identity question: the wicked person looks like the afflicted just man, but is he? Nevertheless, Ben Sira believes the wise will not

(31) The retroversion *qērā'āk* should be preferred because it can account for both GI *prophthasei* and S *qryn lh k'n*. It appears that S misunderstood H *qrh*, "to meet", as S *qr*, "to call", since there is no *qrh*, "to meet", in S (so SMEND, *Die Weisheit Jesus Sirach erklärt*, 179). Having misunderstood H *qrh*, S appears to improvise the rest of the colon, "In the place they do not know him they call him righteous".

(32) Read G *poreuomenos*, "going about" with G MSS l-157<sup>a</sup> 534 339 358 547 679\* Syh Arm, and PETERS, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 163. The reading preferred by J. Ziegler, *ponēreuomenos*, "doing evil", disrupts the pattern in which the *a*-cola of vv.26-28 refer to the evildoer's temporary abasement, while the *b*-cola refer to his enduring malice (v.26b) and readiness to do harm (vv. 27b.28b). The restoration *mēhallēk bēnaḥat* is modelled on the equivalent expression in 12,11a, G *poreuetai sygkekyphos* = H *wihallēk bēnaḥat* (S *wmhlk qdmyk*).

(33) It is uncertain whether one should read with the GI *melania* or S *w'yk tbr npš*. One may reconstruct H *mēšubbar bēnepeš* with the substantial support of the S, on the analogy of possible *mēšubbar bēmārē'hū* at 11,2. G *melania* may have arisen from a scribal confusion of the root *šbr*, "to break", with *šhr*, "to be black". Alternatively, SMEND, *Die Weisheit Jesus Sirach erklärt*, 178, suggests reconstructing some form of the root *qdr*, "to be dark", while viewing S as a free paraphrase here. Smend points to 25,17, *wēyaqdīr pānēh kēdōb*, "and her face darkens like a bear", and Ps 42,10, *lāmā qōdēr 'ēlēk*, "Why do I go along in darkness?".

(34) GI *ethelokopon* is a hapax with no H correspondent. However, the H *hrš*, "to be silent", is common in H Ben Sira, with the hiphil participle, *maḥārīš*, "being silent", appearing at 20,5.6[bis].7. S may be reading a *Vorlage* in which scribal confusion has taken place between H *hrš*, "to be silent", and H *hsb*, "to think". Alternatively, S may be harmonizing this colon with the preceding one which speaks of the malicious attitude of the wicked. Note the similar harmonization by S with the preceding colon in vv. 20b.24a.30a.

be deceived, since Ben Sira elsewhere asserts that wickedness and emotional distress go hand in hand:

The heart of a man changes his countenance,  
                   either for good or for evil.  
 The sign of a good heart is a cheerful countenance;  
                   withdrawn and perplexed is the laborious schemer.

(Sir 13,25-26 NAB)

#### 6. *Strophe D* (vv. 29-30)

Having described the outward appearance of the clever wicked person in Strophe C (bowed-down, long-faced, silent), Ben Sira goes on in Strophe D to describe the outward appearance of the *mēbîn*, “the person of intelligence”, whose character is recognizable from his comely dress, cheerful face, and firm step. However, the boundary between the two strophes is left notably vague. The first line of Strophe D, “From the appearance, a man is distinguished” (v. 29a), could apply just as readily to the description of the clever, wicked person preceding as to the description of the *mēbîn* that follows. The tie between v. 29a and Strophe C is strengthened by sonant links: m-alliteration and the resemblance of *yārēaʿ* and *marʿēh*. The following colon perpetuates the ambiguity. Its first words echo the previous colon and share a similar syntactic structure: a:b:c:d::a:b':c':d' (*min:marʿēh:[is distinguished]:ʿîš::min:neged pānāyw:yiwwād':mēbîn*).

No new information is gained until the very last word, when the ordinarily positive *mēbîn* is substituted for the neutral *ʿîš*. Still, one may wonder whether this is simply not another ironic use of a positive word to describe an evil reality (cf. *daʿat*, *ʿāṣat*, *ḥōkmâ*, vv. 22.23). Ben Sira does not give the reader obvious help in resolving the doubt by labeling the *mēbîn* as godfearing or law-abiding. The poem here departs from its prior devotion to direct communication, displayed in its interest in describing true Wisdom with a clarity and directness that is almost painful (vv. 20.23b.24a). Instead, Ben Sira leaves the reader to confirm by indirect means that a completely different kind of person is under consideration in Strophe D, particularly through a series of sharp contrasts: misery/cheerfulness, long face/broad smile, bowed back/easy gait. Indeed, v. 30 describes the attributes of the *mēbîn* with such concision that they are clarified mostly in contrast to the misery detailed in Strophe C. Thus, Ben Sira demonstrates his claim that the good man can be recognized by

his appearance by forcing his readers to engage in this process of deduction and recognition themselves. The subtlety of the transition between Strophe C's description of the clever but wicked man and Strophe D's description of the righteous *mēbîn* is demonstrated by the fact that not all interpreters have recognized this transition. Indeed, Peters asserts that Strophe D describes how one recognizes wicked enemies from their outward appearance and guards against them<sup>(35)</sup>. On my own first reading of the poem, I was quite in doubt regarding the identity of the person described in Strophe D.

Ben Sira uses indirection in a second way in Strophe D to demonstrate his belief that wisdom is the prime defense against earthly peril (32,14-24; 34,9-12; 36,19-20). Strophe C stressed the vulnerability of readers in face of the hidden malice of the wicked ("in an unexpected place, he attacks you", "if he gets the chance, he will do harm", vv. 27b,28b). However, these threats can prevail only if readers lack the wisdom to recognize the source from which they are launched, only if the reader is unaware (*lō' nōdā'*, v. 27b), but because moral character can be recognized through appearance (v.29), the vulnerable reader of Strophe C can evolve into the knowing, forearmed reader of Strophe D through the very process described above by which Ben Sira forces readers to learn to distinguish between the wicked schemer of Strophe C and the *mēbîn* of Strophe D on the basis of their outward appearance. Ben Sira stresses in Strophe C that one can become the prey of the wicked without wisdom, but implies in Strophe D through a repetition of verbs of revelation that one can maintain the upper hand through knowledge (vv. 27b,29-30).

The elegance of Ben Sira's indirect communication is manifested in one further way in Strophe D. While the first half of the poem describes the consequences of Wisdom in purely abstract and theological terms (fear of Yhwh, performance of the Law, freedom from sin), Strophe D shuns abstraction to describe the *mēbîn* in terms of the concrete benefits of Wisdom: good-looking clothing, cheerfulness, and confident gait. Aramaic Ahikar 2,39 finds a similar relationship between verbal intelligence and fine clothing: "He who shines through his clothes also shines through his language, and he who appears lowly through his clothes appears likewise through his language". It should be recognized that the quality of one's clothing

(<sup>35</sup>) PETERS, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach*, 160.

was immediately revelatory of social status in the ancient world: handspun, handwoven clothing was vastly more expensive than mass-manufactured clothing today, and a poor person might well own only one stained and threadbare cloak (Exod 22,26-27). Still, Ben Sira is confident that the man of true Wisdom will end up far above average in prosperity (11,17; 50,18-27; 51,27-28). Thus, in the final strophe, Ben Sira suggests that Wisdom pays off not only in spiritual benefits, which may hold little attraction for some, but in material abundance, a secure social position, and psychological well-being.

I am reminded of my observations of the Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. These hard working, godfearing German and Swiss immigrants would meet virtually all of Ben Sira's tests for Wisdom. One Sunday, as I passed by a church that obviously permitted its congregants to drive black automobiles, as opposed to the stricter groups that allow only horse-drawn buggies, I was surprised to find that every automobile in the parking lot was a Mercedes.

The two bicola of Strophe D are unified by a repetition of syntactic and semantic elements: a:b:c::a(d):b:c::d:d::d:b:c, where a is prepositional phrase with *min*, b is a verb of revelation, c refers to the person described, and d is a construct phrase describing an aspect of personal appearance.

a : b : c	<i>mimmar'ēh</i> : [is distinguished] : 'îš
a(d) : b : c	<i>ûminneged pānāyw</i> : [is known] : <i>mēbîn</i>
d : d	[the clothing] 'îš : [and the smile of his teeth]
d : b : c	<i>wēhaššē'ādē 'ādām</i> : [tell] : 'ālāyw

### Conclusion

In this masterful sapiential poem Ben Sira displays a varied poetic technique while delivering a powerful message. There is a simplicity bordering on starkness in the thematic statements on Wisdom that open the poem, marking these statements as supremely important through the effort to communicate them with utmost clarity (vv. 20.22a.24). The description of the wicked person is more baroque, reflecting his restless nature, with vivid imagery, a profusion of participles, and less regular sentence structure (vv. 25b-28). The final strophe reverts to a greater regularity and simplicity of sentence structure reflecting the serenity and self-control of the *mēbîn*, "the person of intelligence" (vv. 29-30).

One should recognize that the only assertion of this study that depends on the success of the retroversion of H vocabulary is the claim that there is a sonant resemblance between terms for good and evil (*ḥōkmâ/daʿat raʿ*; *ʿāsôt tôrâ/ʿāṣat* [sinners]; *ʿāṣat* [sinners]/*šekel*; *ḥōkmâ/tôʿēbâ*) and prudence and simpleton (*šekel/sākāl*). These resemblances challenge the reader to make a deeper discernment of the identity or difference of these realities.

However, the poem issues its call to distinguish between true and false wisdom in other ways. Using contrasting criteria, knowledge vs. ignorance (“have plenty of knowledge”/“to lack knowledge”) and obedience vs. Law-breaking (“fear God”/“break the Law”), Ben Sira introduces three of the four possible kinds of human character: WISE/*wise*, WISE/*simple*, and SINFUL/*wise*. The chief problem with the clever schemer is that he goes unrecognized (*lōʾ nôdāʿ*, v. 27b), and thus finds the opportunity to attack (*qērāʾāk*, v. 27b). However, the evildoer can be distinguished from the wise and just person by his outward appearance, which is revelatory of inward character and “tell[s] all about him” (v. 30).

Thus, in this poem on true and false wisdom, Ben Sira proclaims the need for an ongoing effort to distinguish *ḥōkmâ* from *daʿat raʿ*, both on the level of ideas and persons, with the warning that the discernment may not be easy. For a moment, *ʿāṣat ḥōṭēʾim* may sound like *ʿāsôt tôrâ*, but Ben Sira urges the listener to learn the difference. But even after evil has been recognized, Ben Sira warns of the need for constant vigilance: evil may seem abashed, conquered, powerless (*ḥāsar kōaḥ*, v. 28a), but it remains ever ready to attack whenever it is not recognized for what it is (*bēmāqôm lōʾ nôdāʿ qērāʾāk*, v. 27b).

The Catholic University of America  
Washington, DC 20064 USA

Kathleen WEBER



**Bethsaida via Gennesaret:  
The Enigma of the Sea-Crossing in Mark 6,45-53**

Καὶ εὐθὺς ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον  
καὶ προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν... Καὶ διαπεράσαντες  
ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἦλθον εἰς Γεννησαρετ καὶ προσωρμίσθησαν. (Mark  
6,45.53)

These words have traditionally been regarded as being among the most problematical in Mark's Gospel. We are told that Jesus compels (ἀναγκάζω) his disciples to get into the boat and "go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida", while he dismisses the crowd. Since the wind is unfavourable, they are hard put to row to their destination, but during the night Jesus comes to them on the water, and the wind ceases, enabling them to reach land. But when they disembark, it is not at their planned destination, Bethsaida, but at Gennesaret, a place on the other side of the lake, and somewhat further south. Why this sudden change of direction? The obvious solution is that the strong wind blew them off course, and that they were relieved to reach the nearest landing point; but we learn that when Jesus got into the boat the wind abated, so reaching Bethsaida would no longer have been a problem. The difficulty is compounded when we compare the parallel accounts in Matt 14,22-34 and John 6,16-21, since in those passages, there is no incongruity at all. Matthew agrees with Mark that Jesus and his disciples disembarked at Gennesaret (Matt 14,34), but he does not say that they had been bound for Bethsaida. John states that the disciples were destined for Capernaum, and that after Jesus' intervention they arrived there without further difficulty (John 6,21.34). There does *appear* to be some disagreement as to where, exactly, they landed, but if, by "Gennesaret", Matthew is referring to the *plain* of that name rather than the town, and Capernaum was in that general vicinity, there need be no serious discrepancy. All three of the gospels which include the Walking on the Water agree that it was preceded by the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Matt 14,15-21; Mark 6,35-44; John 6,1-15), and there may be some difficulty over which side of the lake this event occurred on — an issue which will be touched upon in due

course. The greatest puzzle, however, still seems to be with Mark, and various solutions have been suggested.

a) One class consists of natural or rational solutions. The boat, naturally enough, was blown off course by the strong wind; or may be it was simply decided to *alter* course and disembark elsewhere.

b) Secondly, there are theories of dislocation. The position of Mark 6,53, with its reference to Gennesaret, seems rather awkward in its present context, and would fit more easily elsewhere — perhaps after the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6,44), but *prior* to the Walking on the Water (6,45). Alternatively, it may be the note in 6,45 that is out of place, and that this would be more appropriate as an introduction to 8,22-26.

c) Thirdly, it is necessary to be aware of textual variants which can alter the accepted understanding of the geographical movement in the passage. Not all readings of Mark 6,45, for instance, specify that the disciples were going “to the other side” of the lake, thus leaving open the possibility that they were embarking on a short trip along the coast. Again, the omission of καὶ προσωρμίσθησαν in some readings of 6,53 is enough to cast a small shadow of doubt over whether Jesus and his disciples arrived at Gennesaret by sea; they may have beached at Bethsaida, and crossed overland (ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν) to Gennesaret.

d) A rather more recent solution is based on structuralist techniques. It has been claimed by Elizabeth Struthers Malbon<sup>(1)</sup> that the landing at Gennesaret instead of Bethsaida was occasioned by the disciples’ refusal to accept Jesus’ mission to the Gentiles. Jesus’ incursion into Gentile territory (Mark 7,24–8,10) thus serves as an extended object lesson, and it is only then, as the fog begins to lift over Jesus’ true identity, that the disciples feel able and willing to make the crossing that had been aborted in 6,53 (cf. 8,22-26). On this view the Markan account is conceived symbolically rather than as an attempt at historical reporting.

The question as to where, precisely, Bethsaida was located has been much discussed<sup>(2)</sup>, but it is not of particular relevance to our

<sup>(1)</sup> E.S. MALBON, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (Sheffield 1986) 27-29; id., “The Jesus of Mark and the Sea of Galilee”, *JBL* 103 (1984) 363-377.

<sup>(2)</sup> Useful material dealing with the issue includes: C.C. McCOWN, “The Problem of the Site of Bethsaida”, *JPOS* 10 (1930) 32-58; B. PIXNER,

enquiry because it does not contribute to solving the problem with which we are faced. Bethsaida has always been suspected of occupying a site east of the Jordan — Et Tell seems to be the most likely spot, despite its slightly inland location — and it is only the suggestion that Bethsaida was in Galilee (John 12,21) which has sent some archaeologists in search of a site west of the river, or has led to the suggestion that there were two settlements of that name in the same general area. The point is that none of the archaeological arguments for one site over another removes the incongruity in Mark's Gospel: Jesus sent the disciples off to Bethsaida — wherever it was — but they arrived in Gennesaret; so the difficulty remains.

In the following pages it is intended to briefly survey the solutions alluded to above, and to assess their merits or otherwise. Then, in the second part of the study, it will be suggested that the most likely solution to the problem is not natural, dislocational or textual at all, but literary. Malbon's structuralist solution may well not fall far short of the mark, although there are certain objections which need to be met. The fact is, however, that the disciples' failure to reach Bethsaida at once, even with Jesus in the boat, has some important theological ramifications; and it is not without significance that, after the imposition of a good deal of other material, they do eventually reach their original destination — in a passage to be found only in Mark (8,22-26).

## I. A Brief Survey of Proposed Solutions

### 1. *Natural or Rational Solutions*

Perhaps the commonest of all solutions to the problem of the aborted voyage to Bethsaida is that the boat was driven off course by the contrary wind (ἤν γὰρ ὁ ἄνεμος ἐναντίος αὐτοῖς). This is certainly the preferred solution of a large number of commentators<sup>(2)</sup>,

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"Searching for the New Testament Site of Bethsaida", *BA* 48 (1985) 207-216; H.-W. KUHN—R. ARAY, "The Bethsaida Excavations: Historical and Archaeological Approaches", *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. B. A. PEARSON) (Minneapolis 1991) 77-106; R. ARAY, *Jesus and His World* (Minneapolis 1995) 19-24.

(2) E. P. GOULD, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh 1896) 124; H. B. SWETE, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London 1908) 140; C. E. B. CRANFIELD, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge 1959) 229; V. TAYLOR, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London 1966) 332; S. E. JOHNSON, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London 1972) 126; W. L. LANE, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids 1974) 240; R. H. GUNDRY, *Mark — A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids 1993) 346.

most of whom presuppose it without further argument. Gustav Dalman<sup>(4)</sup> bears personal testimony to its possibility in stating that in 1908 he and a party of colleagues set sail for Bethsaida from the eastern shore of the lake, but were driven by a strong east wind to Capernaum. But proof that it *could* have happened is no proof that it in fact did so. The obvious problem is that in the disciples' case the wind ceased (ἐκόπασεν) when Jesus joined them, so there would have been no problem in getting back on course. John's Gospel, it is true, infers that they found themselves at their destination as soon as Jesus had entered the boat (John 6,21); there is no reference to the abating of the wind. The phrase in Mark 6,53a (καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν), however, suggests that they were still some way off shore, with every opportunity to alter course.

Rudolph Pesch<sup>(5)</sup> has suggested that the disciples arrived at Gennesaret *as originally planned*. The words πρὸς Βηθσαϊδάν (6,45) could be taken as meaning "towards Bethsaida" – that is, in that general direction — and need not imply that they were heading for the village (or city) itself. But there are two problems here. Mark tells us that Jesus sent his disciples before him "to the other side" (εἰς τὸ πέραν), and, despite Gundry's<sup>(6)</sup> protestations that a journey from one shore into the middle of the lake and then back again would constitute a "crossing", the most natural understanding of the phrase is a crossing from one shore to the other; that is certainly what it means in all other instances in Mark (4,35; 5,1,21; 8,13).

The second difficulty is that, even granting that the disciples *were* heading in the general direction of Bethsaida, they still landed well short of their target. Gennesaret lies some miles to the south-west of Bethsaida itself, and given the limited dimensions of the lake, is a long way distant, comparatively speaking.

## 2. Theories of Dislocation

Various theories of dislocation have been developed to settle the Bethsaida/Gennesaret issue. B.H. Branscomb<sup>(7)</sup> simply asserts that these two "place names are remains from an earlier tradition

(4) G. DALMAN, *Sacred Sites and Ways* (London 1935) 175-176.

(5) R. PESCH, *Das Markusevangelium* (Basel-Freiburg-Wien 1976) I, 359; see also DALMAN, *Sacred Sites*, 175.

(6) GUNDRY, *Mark*, 346; contra D.E. NINEHAM, *Saint Mark* (Harmondsworth 1963) 186.

(7) B.H. BRANSCOMB, *The Gospel of Mark* (London 1937) 119.

from which the connecting links have dropped out". It is difficult from this meagre reference to deduce precisely what he means. M. D. Hooker<sup>(8)</sup>, likewise, is content to attribute the difficulty to a conflation of traditions. It is possible, as she points out, that the detail in 8,22 that Jesus and his disciples did ultimately reach Bethsaida, originally followed on directly from 6,52, and that Mark inserted the intervening material, 6,53–8,21, from a separate source. But why should Mark have inserted a body of material which at this point is so incongruous with its context? Why, when 8,22–26 follows on so smoothly from 6,45–52, should he have deliberately broken up this sequence using such geographically and thematically incongruous material? The insertion of a controversy story (7,1–23) into a passage devoted to Jesus' miracle-working activity would be decidedly odd, and a whistle-stop tour of the region around Tyre and Sidon (7,24–37) during a period of activity around the lakeside would be stranger still.

W. Grundmann and T. Snoy<sup>(9)</sup> think that the detail in 6,53 originally concluded the first feeding miracle (6,35–44), but although this may solve some difficulties it introduces others. It would certainly put the disciples in the right spot for a legitimate crossing εἰς τὸ πέραν, while at the same time removing the geographical awkwardness at the end of the Walking on the Water, since 6,54–56 is not geographically specific, and could as well imply Bethsaida as Gennesaret. Indeed, the rapidity with which Jesus attracted a following as soon as he stepped out of the boat would suggest that he was in the vicinity of a population centre — and Bethsaida was one of the largest around the lake. However, the participle διαπεράσαντες (6,53) suggests a full crossing of the lake from one side to the other<sup>(10)</sup>, so that if this verse is located where

<sup>(8)</sup> M. D. HOOKER, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London 1991) 171.

<sup>(9)</sup> W. GRUNDMANN, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Berlin 1977) 187; T. SNOY, "La rédaction marcionne de la marche sur les eaux", *ETL* 44 (1968) 234–236.

<sup>(10)</sup> The use of διαπεράω is rare in the New Testament, but it always seems to be used of a crossing from one side to the other. This is clearly the case in Mark 5,21 where Jesus crosses to the western shore after his exorcism of the Gadarene demoniac. The Matthean parallel (9,1) makes this even clearer by stating that Jesus came to his "own city" (ἰδία πόλις). The healing of the paralytic which follows (Matt 9,1–8) indicates that this was Capernaum (cf. Mark 2,1). The occurrence of διαπεράω in Matt 14,34

Grundmann indicates, the Feeding of the Five Thousand must be placed on the *eastern* shore. Is this likely? The common view is that while the Feeding of the Four Thousand (8,1-10) makes use of Gentile numbers and takes place in Gentile territory (the eastern shore), the other feeding uses Jewish numbers and takes place in "Jewish" territory (the western shore)<sup>(11)</sup>. While this view may be regarded as a little too simplistic (Galilee itself boasted a thriving Gentile population in the first century), it is clear that the second feeding did take place on the eastern shore since, in 8,10, Jesus seems to interrupt his Gentile mission (7,34–8,26) for the express purpose of dealing with the Pharisees' request for a sign (8,11-12). Certainly, in 8,13 he is found re-embarking to go to the other side (πάλιν ἐμβὰς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸ πέραν)<sup>(12)</sup>. Furthermore, there is no real indication that the first feeding took place anywhere outside Galilee. The whole of the action in Mark 6 is set in the villages of that province (6,6b), and Herod's interest in Jesus (6,14) can only have been due to the fact that it was his territory which had become the sphere of operations. Only in 6,32, with the return of the disciples from their mission (6,7-13), does the scene change: "And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves". But this need not mean that they crossed the lake. Indeed, the picture which Mark paints in 6,33 suggests that they did not. People saw the boat and ran ahead of it until it docked. This would have been rather difficult to do had the boat journey been directly across the lake.

One further problem with Grundmann's proposal is that although it dispels the difficulty of the incongruity between intended and actual destinations, it takes little account of the following pericope, 7,1-23. As it stands, the arrival at Gennesaret in 6,53 makes an appropriate setting for the thoroughly Jewish debate on

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parallels the usage in Mark 6,53. The only other two occurrences are in Luke-Acts. Luke 16,26 speaks of the chasm between heaven and hell which none can cross, while Acts 21,2 describes Paul's crossing by ship from Patara in Asia Minor to Phoenicia.

<sup>(11)</sup> Among many others, see A. E. J. RAWLINSON, *Saint Mark* (London 1925) 86, 104.

<sup>(12)</sup> The use of πάλιν at this point could well indicate that Jesus had arrived at Dalmanutha after a boat journey across the lake, and was now about to make the return trip. We do know that he arrived at Dalmanutha by boat (8,10), but we are not told his specific point of departure.

ritual purity. Jesus needs to be on “Jewish” territory for that. If he had arrived at Bethsaida as planned he would have been left on the wrong (“Gentile”) side of the lake for this next episode, and to get Jesus back thence would surely still have involved some kind of literary awkwardness<sup>(13)</sup>.

The dislocation theories to which we have so far alluded all depend upon the view that 6,53-56 is a largely traditional unit, and that the incongruity between Bethsaida (6,45) and Gennesaret (6,53) arises as a result of the conflation or displacement of traditional elements. But many scholars see a good deal of redactional material here. Even commentators like Vincent Taylor<sup>(14)</sup>, who regard Mark as having been composed of traditional units, admit that while 6,53-56 may have a traditional base, it is, in its present form, a largely Markan composition. Others, including Rudolf Bultmann<sup>(15)</sup>, assign the entire unit to the redaction: it is, for them, a wholesale Markan narrative. If that is the case we are left with no alternative but to accept that Mark created the discrepancy himself, either accidentally or deliberately. If deliberately, what purpose could he have had in mind? Of course, “if” is the operative word. *Is* the unit wholly redactional? If it is, Mark must have plucked the place-name Gennesaret from thin air, since he uses it only here. The Evangelist’s supposed ignorance of Palestinian geography is legendary, and geographical accuracy was certainly not his chief concern. Still, the name Gennesaret does suggest a fragment of tradition, even if Mark subsequently wove his own pericope around it. But in that case, why did he retain the name at all? Did he overlook the resultant discrepancy with 6,45, or did he fully intend to make it serve his purposes?

Although we do not have the space to argue the case in detail, it may well be that Taylor is right in thinking that 6,53-56 is a largely redactional piece which nevertheless rests on a fragment of tradition. There is little sense behind the place-name Gennesaret unless it derives from a traditional story about something that Jesus did

(13) This difficulty has been spotted by W. MARXSEN, *Mark the Evangelist* (Nashville 1969) 69, n. 2, who transplants 6,53, with its reference to Gennesaret, to 7,1-23. W. SCHMITHALS, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Gütersloh 1979) I, 339, tries to eradicate the problem by locating 6,53 between 5,20 and 5,22.

(14) TAYLOR, *Mark*, 331; so also CRANFIELD, *Mark*, 229.

(15) R. BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford 1963) 341; see also E. J. PRYKE, *Redactional Style in the Marcan Gospel* (SNTSMS 33; Cambridge 1978) 15, 24.

there. On the other hand, the unit is replete with characteristic Markan vocabulary<sup>(16)</sup>, and is clearly intended as a summary passage similar to those elsewhere in the Gospels<sup>(17)</sup>. There are clear affinities with 3,7-12 which summarises the early part of the Galilean ministry (1,14-3,6); in like manner, 6,53-56 summarises the next phase (3,13-6,52), laying emphasis, as does 3,7-12, on Jesus' wonderworking activity.

A few scholars, notably P.J. Achtemeier<sup>(18)</sup>, take the view, more recently alluded to by Hooker, that the Walking on the Water (6,45-51) and the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8,22-26) were originally juxtaposed. It is well known that Achtemeier conceives of two pre-Markan miracle catenae, the first consisting of 4,35-5,43; 6,34-44.53; and the second of 6,45-51; 8,22-26; 7,24b-30.32-37; 8,1-10. Mark rearranged these and incorporated them into his Gospel for his own theological purposes, using brief editorial comments (4,35; 5,21c.24.43a; 6,34bc.35b.54c.50c.51b; 7,36; 8,1a) to thread them all together. Achtemeier claims that 6,54-56 was composed by Mark himself to fill the void left by 8,22-26 which was displaced from its original position next to the Walking on the

<sup>(16)</sup> PRYKE, *Redactional Style*, 142, conveniently assembles the evidence for redactional activity in Mark 6,53-56. The use of the genitive absolute (καὶ ἐξεληθόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου... 6,54), ἄρχομαι + infinitive (καὶ ἤρξαντο... περιφέρειν, 6,55), and "impersonals" (verbs with an unspecified subject, 6,54.55) betray Mark's grammatical hand. Similarly, the vocabulary is characteristic of the Evangelist. Words which are frequently used elsewhere, many in clearly redactional contexts, include; εὐθύς (43 times in Mark, of which 33 are redactional, according to Pryke), ἅπτεσθαι (11/7), ἄρχεσθαι (27/26), ἐξέρχεσθαι (38/25), κράβατος (5/3), κόμη (7/5), πόλις (8/5), πλοῖον (17/12), σφῆνιξ (14/8). These statistics, of course, can be disputed, but Pryke has provided enough evidence to show that 6,53-56 is thoroughly redactional. Indeed, he could have pointed also to the phrase ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν 6,53) which is found thirteen times in the Gospel as a whole (often in the form ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), at least some instances of which could well be redactional. Even the rarer words like περιτρέχω (6,55), a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, and διαπεράω (Matt 9,1; 14,34; Mark 5,21; 6,53; Luke 16,26; Acts 21,2) conform well with the Markan vocabulary, and could themselves be redactional.

<sup>(17)</sup> Mark 1,27-28.32-34.38-39.45; 3,7-12; 6,30-34. PRYKE, *Redactional Style*, 24, lists several other passages — 1,21-22; 2,1-2; 3,6.20-21; 4,1-2; 5,20; 6,1-2a.6b-13; 9,14-17a — but these appear to me to be more characteristic of Markan seams or transition passages than of genuine summaries, particularly as many of them introduce fresh material.

<sup>(18)</sup> P.J. ACHEMEIER, "Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae", *JBL* 89 (1970) 281-284.



Water, and made to serve as a paradigm for Peter's confession (8,27-33). Achtemeier notes that the verb ἐξελθὼν in 6,34a does not specify that Jesus was disembarking from a boat as in 5,2 and 6,54; it could imply his emerging from a house — the house of Jairus, perhaps — hence the link with 5,43. It is only the later redaction (6,30-33) which suggests that Jesus was travelling by boat.

Assuming that Achtemeier is right, how far does his theory go to solving our geographical incongruities? The first catena of miracle stories includes the raising of Jairus' daughter which clearly takes place on the western shore of the lake (cf. 5,21b). Then comes the Feeding of the Five Thousand, which is supposed to have occurred when Jesus had come out (ἐξελθὼν) of the house. The implication is that in the original catena these miracles take place in the vicinity. But now Achtemeier<sup>(19)</sup> says that the feeding concludes with the geographical rubric in 6,53 to the effect that Jesus and his disciples crossed over by boat εἰς τὸ πέραν, to *Gennesaret*. But how could they cross over to the western shore if they were already there? The difficulty might be explained with reference to redactional activity, but Achtemeier insists that this rubric is *not* Markan, but was part of the original catena. Consequently, he has no answer to the problem.

The second catena, it is suggested, begins with the Walking on the Water (6,45-51), but the references to the stormy conditions are redactional<sup>(20)</sup>, having been suggested by the Stilling of the Storm (4,35-41), so that in the original catena the disciples were not shown to have experienced any particular difficulty in reaching their destination, Bethsaida. To maintain the flow of the story, Achtemeier now has to transplant the healing of the blind man (8,22-26) from its Markan position since this is specifically said to have occurred at Bethsaida. The bulk of the Gentile mission (7,24b-30.32-37; 8,1-10) is then located *after* this pericope, but the references to Tyre and Sidon (7,24a.31) are excised so that all this activity is made to take place elsewhere. It would be natural to

(19) ACHTEMEIER, "Isolation", 284. See also SNOY, "Rédaction", 234-236, who suggests a parallel between the arrival by boat of Jesus and his disciples at Gennesaret (if 6,53 concludes the Feeding of the Five Thousand) and their arrival at Dalmanutha at the end of the Feeding of the Four Thousand (8,10).

(20) It is not clear to me why Achtemeier feels that the reference to the abating of the wind in v.51b is redactional, but not the detail about the stormy conditions in v.48a.

think of the Decapolis as the locale since, according to this catena, Jesus has already crossed the Jordan, given that Bethsaida was to the east; but Achtemeier, taking advantage of the lack of geographical specificity, suggests Galilee as the most likely place. It would have been pointless for Jesus to have balked at feeding the Gentiles (7,27) if he had made a point of venturing into Gentile territory. But Achtemeier seems to have overlooked the fact that, even on the understanding that this catena circulated independently, Jesus had already set foot there, strictly-speaking (8,22-26).

What, finally, does Achtemeier's theory achieve? Like all dislocation theories of this kind, it attributes the geographical difficulties in Mark's Gospel to Mark himself rather than to the pre-Markan tradition. Then the question becomes one of intent. Did Mark realise that his rearrangement of the traditional material would cause such problems? Although not decisive on the issue, Achtemeier concludes that the Evangelist was prepared to tolerate such difficulties, if he was aware of them, for the sake of his theological programme. Thus, Mark appended 6,45-51 to 6,35-44 because he wanted to interpret both these miracles in the light of the disciples' obtuseness, which he emphasises in the redactional 6,52. But somehow, Occam's razor, like the sword of Damocles, hangs perilously over Achtemeier's thesis. Such are its complexities that it is unlikely to be correct in every detail, even though it opens up some promising avenues of exploration. Achtemeier's Mark appears to be more concerned with juggling his traditional material than with developing a coherent theological programme. There is little suggestion that Mark uses this opportunity to make the geographical inconsistencies actually work for him.

Dislocation theories are by nature speculative, and tend to make the Evangelist look more like a ham-fisted scissors-and-paste compiler than a competent redactor. But redaction and rhetorical criticism have shown him to be a literary editor of some standing, well-capable of arranging his sources to suit his purposes. It seems more reasonable to assert that Mark knew well enough what he was doing when he created his geographical inconsistencies — or allowed them to stand in the traditions he received.

### 3. *Textual Solutions*

The difficulty involved in the disciples' striking out for Bethsaida but landing at Gennesaret did not go unnoticed among

the scribal transmitters, and the clutch of textual variants at 6,45 is hardly surprising. The generally accepted reading of the phrase in question is εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαιῶν. As it stands this could mean that Jesus sent the disciples *to* Bethsaida, or *in the direction of* Bethsaida; but as we have seen, neither of these obviates the difficulty, since Gennesaret was not even in the vicinity, nor does the view, still championed by a few archaeologists<sup>(21)</sup>, that there were two Bethsaidas in close proximity, one of which lay to the west of the Jordan. The view of M.-J. Lagrange<sup>(22)</sup> that πρὸς should be taken in the sense of “opposite to” is no better, since that would not be the natural inference from the geographical relationship between Gennesaret and Bethsaida; they could not, strictly-speaking, be said to face each other. In short, if the destination had been Gennesaret all along, why did not Mark simply say so? Some manuscripts (Θ 28 565 700 sa bo sy<sup>p</sup> geo<sup>2</sup> Orig Ta<sup>ar</sup>) substitute εἰς for πρὸς, but this makes little difference to the sense, and does not advance the issue.

More significant, perhaps, is another group of readings in which εἰς τὸ πέραν is omitted, and only πρὸς Βηθσαιῶν (P<sup>45</sup>vidW 118) or εἰς Βηθσαιῶν (f<sup>1</sup> 209 1582 2193 sy<sup>s</sup> geo<sup>1</sup>) is allowed to stand. If this were the correct reading, it would obviate the necessity for the disciples having to begin their journey from one particular side of the lake, and there would be no need to posit the existence of two Bethsaidas. If, as John 12,21 insists, Bethsaida was in Galilee, it would simply mean that the disciples set out from the eastern shore. No doubt the greater geographical ambiguity caused by the omission of εἰς τὸ πέραν was intended to remove some of the difficulty<sup>(23)</sup>, but the major stumbling-block remains: if the disciples were bound for Bethsaida, why did they end up at Gennesaret?

Another variant, which certainly does aim at solving the geographical problem, is the retention of εἰς τὸ πέραν and the excision of πρὸς Βηθσαιῶν (1689 983), and this was accepted by

(21) PIXNER, “Searching”, 207-216.

(22) M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Marc* (Paris 1929) 172.

(23) F.C. BURKITT, “The Chester Beatty Papyri”, *JTS* 34 (1933) 367, however, argues that εἰς τὸ πέραν was added as a scribal assimilation to Matt 14,22. TAYLOR, *Mark*, 327, is convinced by this, but it is hard to see why a scribe should have felt it necessary to add such an apparently insignificant phrase, particularly as it would create further difficulties. The principle of *lectio difficilior* would suggest that εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαιῶν stood in the Markan text from the outset.

Couchoud<sup>(24)</sup> on the grounds that it is compatible with 6,53, and with the Matthean and Johannine parallels; but the reading is so poorly attested, and then only in the late minuscules<sup>(25)</sup>, that it is difficult to see how this could ever have been the original reading. Clearly, Matthew's Gospel, with its omission of πρὸς Βηθσαϊδάν (Matt 14,22) was the driving force here, and it is Matthew who can claim to be the first interpreter to have attempted a solution to the problem.

An intriguing variant in a few Old Latin manuscripts (bilq) reads *a Bedsaida* (ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδάν): Jesus sent the disciples away from Bethsaida to the other side. On this view the boat would certainly be heading in the right direction, towards Gennesaret which is reached at Mark 6,53, but then there is the problem of how Jesus and his disciples reached Bethsaida in the first place, since the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6,35-44) seems to have occurred on the western side of the lake. As Couchoud<sup>(26)</sup> notes, this Latin variant, which lacks any Greek attestation, seems to be a particularly ingenious attempt to assimilate Mark 6,45 to the Lukan account. The Third Evangelist specifically states that the Feeding of the Five Thousand took place at Bethsaida (Luke 9,10b)<sup>(27)</sup>, but he omits the story of the Walking on the Water. The Old Latin variant of Mark 6,45, by simply altering πρὸς to ἀπὸ, is able to locate the feeding at Bethsaida in agreement with Luke, and at the same time have the boat returning to Gennesaret in conformity with Mark 6,53. The reason for this elaboration, therefore, is obvious. Léon Vaganay<sup>(28)</sup> justifiably remarks that if ἀπὸ had stood in the original

<sup>(24)</sup> P.-L. COUCHOUD, "Notes sur le texte de St Marc dans le Codex Chester Beatty", *JTS* 35 (1934) 8-9.

<sup>(25)</sup> The manuscripts in question, 1689 and 983, are thought to date from the tenth and thirteenth centuries respectively.

<sup>(26)</sup> COUCHOUD, "Notes", 9.

<sup>(27)</sup> There are several variants of Luke 9,10b which indicate that some scribal redactors were not entirely happy with Luke's geography either. In the main, the problem involves the description of Bethsaida: was it a city (κ<sup>1</sup> ABCLWΞmg\*f<sup>(1)</sup>f<sup>13</sup>33 pc sy<sup>(s)</sup>(p)<sup>(h)</sup>), or a village (DΘr<sup>1</sup>)? But a few manuscripts excise the place-name altogether, preferring εἰς τόπον ἔρημον as in Mark 6,31 (so κ<sup>\*2</sup> (1241) sy<sup>c</sup>bo<sup>mss</sup>). Another variant (ACWΞf<sup>(1)</sup>f<sup>13</sup> sy<sup>(p)</sup><sup>h</sup>) specifies this as being in the vicinity of Bethsaida.

<sup>(28)</sup> L. VAGANAY, "Marc VI, 45. Essai de critique textuelle", *RB* 49 (1940) 17. Vaganay's article as a whole (5-32) is an extensive examination of the text- and literary-critical problems of this verse.

it is difficult to see why a scribal redactor should have created a textual incongruity by deliberately substituting *πρὸς* or *εἰς*.

One other interesting, but poorly attested variant occurs in 6,53 where D 45 a b c ff q read, after *διαπεράσαντες*, *ἐκεῖθεν* — “And when they had crossed over *from there*...”. This gives the impression that the disciples reached their original destination, Bethsaida, and “from there” ventured back to Gennesaret. But if that were so, it would be strange indeed if, having reached their goal as planned, they did nothing other than return immediately to the other side. It is highly likely that the variant was added simply to smooth out the difficulty of their arriving at Gennesaret instead of Bethsaida. Mark 6,53 as it stands in its best attested form is, in fact, clearer about the disciples’ movements than is the Matthean parallel (14,34). The word *προσωρμίσθησαν*, “to come to anchor”, which Matthew omits<sup>(29)</sup>, is suggestive of the culmination of a boat journey, and this is confirmed in Mark 6,54a, *καὶ ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου*..., a clause which Matthew again omits. These Matthean omissions *could* alter the geographical sense. Although it is *likely* that Matt 14,34 is to be understood in much the same way as Mark 6,53, it is just possible, reading the text as generally accepted (i.e. *καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν εἰς Γεννησαρετ*), that Matthew’s text could mean: “And when they had crossed over [to Bethsaida] they came over land to Gennesaret”; but this is by no means the natural inference, and Matthew could have been much more specific if that is what he did, in fact, mean.

In the final analysis, then, the various textual solutions to our problem are no more compelling than the theories of dislocation. The Bethsaida/Gennesaret discrepancy stands in the large majority of readings, including most of the best attested ones, and Mark himself appears to have been singularly unconcerned with it. The conclusion, once again, must be that, at the very least, Mark did not regard the inconsistency as interfering with his theological

(<sup>29</sup>) It should be said that several readings of Mark 6,53 (DWΘ 1.28.209.565.700 a b c f f i q r<sup>1</sup> aur sy<sup>s p</sup> geo arm), like the Matthean parallel, also omit the term. F. C. BURKITT, “W and Θ; Studies in the Western Text of St. Mark”, *JTS* 17 (1916) 19-20, regards it as original, and believes that *καὶ προσωρμίσθησαν* dropped out at an early stage. Certainly, it is hard to see why a scribe would have added these seemingly insignificant words. Their omission, on the other hand, could well have been due to assimilation to Matt 14,34.

programme, and may well have made use of it to enhance his message.

#### 4. *A Structuralist Solution*

A more recent attempt to solve the Bethsaida/Gennesaret mystery has been made by E. S. Malbon<sup>(30)</sup> along "structuralist" lines. Her thesis accords more credence than hitherto to Mark's use of narrative in illuminating his theological programme. She argues that the disciples' failure to reach Bethsaida at the outset is indicative of their obduracy, and in particular their resistance to the idea that the gospel could possibly be meant for Gentiles as well as for Jews. Jesus' preaching tours, she maintains, are always anticipated before he embarks upon them. For instance, Jesus' fame spreads throughout Galilee (1,28) even before he has moved beyond Capernaum, so that by the time he embarks on a preaching tour of other Galilean villages (1,39) he is already well-known. Again, the Gerasene demoniac, whom Jesus heals in 5,1-20, spreads the word throughout the Decapolis (5,20) long before Jesus arrives there in person (7,31). Other people come to Jesus from all those places where he himself will later preach (3,7-8).

By contrast, Jesus' arrival at Bethsaida in 8,22-26 is "negatively anticipated" by the disciples' failure to reach that place in 6,45-53. The fact that Jesus "compels" (ἀναγκάζω) his disciples to cross to Bethsaida suggests that they are unwilling to do so, and it is no surprise, therefore, to find them docking at Gennesaret, still on the western side of the lake. At this point they do "not understand about the loaves, [because] their hearts [are] hardened" (6,52). Before any change of heart can take place, Jesus has to undertake a Gentile mission as an object lesson to them. Thus, we find him, i) arguing against the laws of ritual purity which not only separate Jew from Jew, but also Jew from Gentile (7,1-23)<sup>(31)</sup>; ii) travelling to the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon where he confirms the faith of a Gentile woman (7,24-30); iii) healing a deaf-mute in the (Gentile)

<sup>(30)</sup> See n. 1, above.

<sup>(31)</sup> Mark 7,1-23, of course, has an extremely complex tradition-history which it is not possible to examine here. For a convenient survey of the difficulties and possible solutions, see J. LAMBRECHT, "Jesus and the Law: An Investigation of Mark 7,1-23", *ETL* 53 (1977) 24-82 (esp. 29-39, 80-82); and R. P. BOOTH, *Jesus and the Law of Purity* (Sheffield 1986) 23-96.

Decapolis (7,31-37); iv) miraculously feeding a multitude on the eastern (Gentile) shore of the lake (8,1-10). Only then, after returning to Dalmanutha (8,10), do they set sail for Bethsaida once more (8,13) and, after an intense discussion concerning the disciples' understanding about bread (8,14-21), reach their intended destination (8,22-26). For Malbon, then, the Sea of Galilee serves as a symbolic barrier between the disciples' defective understanding of Jesus' Gentile mission and Jesus' own correct understanding. Only when they begin to see things Jesus' way are they afforded a clear passage across the lake.

Such, then, is the theory. How convincing is it? The scholar above all others with whom Malbon feels she has to take issue is W. H. Kelber. In his book *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time*, Kelber argues that the voyage of the disciples in 6,45 was successfully negotiated, and that they arrived at Bethsaida as planned. The reference to Gennesaret in 6,53 arises out of Mark's rearrangement of traditional materials<sup>(32)</sup>. For Kelber, the expressions εἰς τὸ πέραν (6,45) and διαπεράσαντες (6,53) always imply a full crossing of the lake from one side to the other, and cannot refer to a trip along the shore<sup>(33)</sup>. In the same way, the absence of πέραν in 8,10 suggests that Jesus did not cross the lake on that occasion, but only at 8,13, when the voyage was from east to west. But the reasoning here seems dubious and leads to grave geographical difficulties. It leaves both controversies of Jesus with the Pharisees (7,1-23; 8,11-12) on the *eastern* (Gentile) side of the lake, and the final voyage (8,13) is apparently taking them *away* from Bethsaida, which they are said to reach in 8,22. Kelber's over-reliance on the significance of that one adverb πέραν, seriously distorts his perception of Mark's geographical programme, and in my view Malbon's challenge<sup>(34)</sup> wins the day.

Again, Malbon is no doubt correct to resist Kelber's "unifying" interpretation of Galilee. He argues that the lake, which Mark first uses as a symbol of distinction between Jewish and

(32) W. H. KELBER, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia 1974) 57-58. But he seems to me to accept too uncritically Achtemeier's "text displacement" solution to the Bethsaida/Gennesaret problem (see n. 18, above).

(33) KELBER, *Kingdom*, 57, 61. See also N. R. PETERSEN, "The Composition of Mark 4:1-8:26", *HTR* 73 (1980) 196-198.

(34) MALBON, "Jesus of Mark", 370-372.

Gentile Christianity, is so completely subdued and traversed by Jesus' universalising activity, that Galilee at last comes to signify all territories where Jesus sets foot<sup>(35)</sup>, both east and west of the lake. Galilee loses its force as an ethnic province, and comes instead to represent an experience in which "Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians live together in the newness of the Kingdom"<sup>(36)</sup>. It is true enough, says Malbon, that Jesus is working towards bringing Jew and Gentile alike into the Kingdom, but he does it *in spite of* the ethnic barriers which the Sea of Galilee represents, and which are overcome only with difficulty by the disciples<sup>(37)</sup>. That Malbon's is the more plausible view we shall hope to demonstrate below.

On another matter which Kelber raises, however, Malbon curiously declines to take issue. It is germane to her thesis that Galilee is the Galilee of the Jews rather than of the Gentiles (cf. Isa 9,1). But, historically speaking, it is known that the province contained a large Gentile population in the first century, and in theological terms Kelber is representative of a well-patronised school of thought which argues that Mark regarded Galilee as the place of the eschaton where his largely Gentile church was to meet with the Lord at his Parousia<sup>(38)</sup>. Now, *if* Kelber and his predecessors are right about Galilee, it hardly seems possible that Malbon can maintain her position. She shows well enough that Jesus' ministry there is to the Jews — there is no indication that his Galilean healings and exorcisms (1,21-28.29-31.32-34.39.40-45; 2,1-12; 3,1-6.10-11; 5,21-43; 6,5.53-56) involve Gentiles; but that is not sufficient in itself to demonstrate that for Mark Galilee is symbolically Jewish. The phrase εἰς τὸ πέραν (or equivalent) is used frequently enough to suggest that Mark conceives of two distinct sides to the lake (πέραν - 4,35; 5,1.21; 6,45; 8,13; διαπεράω -

<sup>(35)</sup> See also MARXSEN, *Mark the Evangelist*, 93-94.

<sup>(36)</sup> KELBER, *Kingdom*, 62-63. A rather similar view is espoused by J. SCHREIBER, *Theologie des Vertrauens: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Markusevangelium* (Hamburg 1967) 205-207.

<sup>(37)</sup> MALBON, "Jesus of Mark", 373.

<sup>(38)</sup> KELBER, *Kingdom*, 129-147. Kelber's thesis is little more than a modification of that presented by E. LOHMEYER, *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (FRLANT 52; Göttingen 1936); R. H. LIGHTFOOT, *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels* (London 1938); and MARXSEN, *Mark the Evangelist*, 54-116, 151-206. Obviously, these scholars differ over matters of detail, but the outline of their thesis in general, that for Mark Galilee is the place of the eschaton and of salvation, is well-known, and need not be elucidated here.



5,21; 6,53), but it is far from certain that they are intended to represent *ethnic* barriers. Just as plausible, as we shall argue below, is the possibility that the lake is presented symbolically as an obstacle to the disciples' perception of Jesus' true messianic identity.

A further observation which may count against Malbon's interpretation concerns the role of Mark 6,52. Malbon claims that the first sea voyage to Bethsaida is aborted because the disciples do not understand about the Gentiles — they refuse to accept that Jesus' "bread" is for Gentiles as well as for Jews. But, after the Walking on the Water, the redactional remark is made that the disciples "were utterly astounded, for they did not understand *about the loaves*". The reference, of course, is to the Feeding of the Five Thousand (6,35-44). On Malbon's view, however, it is a mystery that they should have been so perplexed about the *Jewish* feeding. If her thesis were correct, we would surely be entitled to expect the comment in 6,52 to have been placed after the Feeding of the *Four* Thousand (8,1-10), since it was Jesus' ministry to the *Gentiles* which the disciples did not understand. The fact that Mark has *not* arranged his text in this manner presents Malbon with a difficulty. Her response is to say that 6,52 presents the disciples with hardened hearts, which is precisely their condition prior to, rather than after Jesus' Gentile mission. But given that their obduracy is still evident even as they are about to land at Bethsaida (8,17), and that Jesus' itinerary among the Gentiles appears to have had no effect at all on their attitude, it is probable that Mark's purpose in including 6,52 is not what Malbon takes it to be.

## II. A Literary-Critical Solution

Despite the objections raised against Malbon, her attempted solution to the Bethsaida/Gennesaret problem is no doubt as attractive as the more traditional (rational, text-displacement and text-critical) solutions, and certainly takes account of the data just as effectively, if not more so. Regardless of her claim to be working along structuralist lines<sup>(39)</sup>, there is more than a hint — at least at this particular point in her study — of what Stanley Porter<sup>(40)</sup> has

<sup>(39)</sup> MALBON, *Narrative Space*, 2-6, claims to be using an adaptation of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist interpretation of myth.

<sup>(40)</sup> S. E. PORTER, "Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstruction and Back", *Approaches to New Testament Study* (ed. S. E. PORTER—D. TOMBS) (JSNTSS 120; Sheffield 1995) 97-99.

recently labelled the “common-sense” method of literary criticism. On the basis of what he says, and the examples he gives<sup>(41)</sup>, it seems that “common-sense” criticism is meant to denote a kind of literary anti-method in which a critic may claim to be doing literary criticism without defining what he or she means by it, and without basing his or her study on a well-established method approved by secular and biblical literary critics alike. By contrast, “defined formalism”<sup>(42)</sup> is a label applied to those studies which are founded securely upon literary theory of one kind or another. Narrative criticism, for example, while not itself recognised as an independent category in secular literary critical circles, tends to lean heavily upon the narrative theory developed by secular critics like Wayne Booth and Seymour Chatman<sup>(43)</sup>.

While accepting that the term “literary criticism” covers a whole range of methods, each of which must be carefully defined before it can be successfully deployed in literary studies of the Bible, I am not as pessimistic about the value of the “common-sense” or phenomenological approach as those who insist upon a firm bedrock of literary theory. One must remember that the latter has been developed by twentieth-century secular literary critics for the purpose of elucidating modern literature, and biblical critics should be particularly cautious when applying it to ancient texts. The Evangelists, after all, are hardly likely to have written their gospels in accordance with contemporary literary principles. The “common-sense” approach at least has the advantage of taking the text as it stands and commenting upon its narrative arrangement as the final editor intended it. By studying a Gospel’s pericopae as they relate to one another, both spatially and linguistically, we can surely glean something of the Evangelist’s theology — or christology.

Still, none of this implies that scholars who eschew the application of modern literary methods to biblical texts are totally

<sup>(41)</sup> For instance, C.H. TALBERT, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York 1982). Talbert followed this with sister volumes on 1 and 2 Corinthians (1987) and the Gospel of John (1992).

<sup>(42)</sup> PORTER, “Literary Approaches”, 99-106.

<sup>(43)</sup> W.C. BOOTH, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Harmondsworth 2<sup>nd</sup> 1983); S. CHATMAN, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY 1978).

bereft of literary theory. The *Poetics* of Aristotle<sup>(44)</sup>, for instance, provides some useful critical insights, and also has the advantage of being closer to (though, of course, not contemporary with) the time of the gospels, and it is surely to this work that we should be appealing rather than to modern literary criticism, if we wish to apply critical canons to ancient texts.

In the second part of this paper, I wish to show that the Bethsaida/Gennesaret problem is susceptible to a literary critical solution, as Malbon suggests, but that it is perhaps most evident through a consideration of the Markan plot. However, I do not propose here to apply the contemporary canons of plot criticism, as some students of the gospels have recently attempted to do<sup>(45)</sup>, since, for obvious reasons, Mark could not have conformed to them. Rather, I shall briefly consider, by reference to that doyen of all ancient literary critics, Aristotle, what was likely to have been understood by plot in Mark's day; then I shall demonstrate how Mark uses this understanding to peculiar effect by employing a device which, for want of a better word, I shall call plot suspension (as opposed to suspense). Finally, I hope to show how this device may shed light on the Bethsaida/Gennesaret conundrum.

<sup>(44)</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics* (trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe) (LCL; Cambridge, MA–London 1927). Other ancient authors tried their hand at literary criticism, but Aristotle was the most influential figure, certainly the most enduring, and it is to him that we must restrict our comments here.

<sup>(45)</sup> So F.J. MATERA, "The Plot of Matthew's Gospel", *CBQ* 49 (1987) 233-253; M.A. POWELL, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel", *NTS* 38 (1992) 187-204. For modern critical assessments of the concept of plot, I refer the reader to the bibliographies in these articles (Matera, 233; Powell, 187). In disregarding those studies which apply modern plot theory to ancient texts, I do not mean to depreciate their value. My point is that the results obtained thereby are bound to be different from those obtained from a consideration of plot criticism in Aristotle because his perception of plot is not identical with the diverse views which exist among contemporary literary critics. MATERA, "Plot", 234, has said that "attention to plot, as understood by contemporary literary critics, can provide NT students with a helpful view of the Gospels as stories", and this is a legitimate enterprise. But examining the *ancient* understanding of plot allows for the possibility of discovering how authors like the Evangelists handled plot on their own — perhaps Aristotelian — terms.

### 1. *The Concept of Plot in Aristotle's Poetics*

Aristotle's conception of plot has already been much discussed, so I do not intend to cover that ground again. We do, however, need to take account of what is relevant to the matter in question. The one point which ancient and modern critics alike are agreed upon is that the causal factor is fundamental to plot. Whatever else it is, a plot is a sequence of causal events which propel the narrative forward. Aristotle says:

... the component incidents must be so arranged that if one of them be transposed or removed, the unity of the whole is dislocated and destroyed<sup>(46)</sup>.

Later, he adds:

Of simple plots and actions, the worst are those which are 'episodic'. By this I mean a plot in which the episodes do not follow each other probably or inevitably<sup>(47)</sup>.

Notice that the all-important prerequisite for plot is natural sequence. It is not simply that event B follows event A; event A must *cause* event B to happen. This was certainly understood by the leading Greek tragedians, even prior to Aristotle; the plot of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, for instance, is widely acknowledged as one of the finest in the entire history of literature. It is highly likely that dramatists and other writers after Aristotle were well aware of his comments, and possibly even felt free to contravene the ground rules. There are certainly tragic dramas in which the causal factor does not come off, and the resolution has to be contrived. However, contrivance was not uncommon in Greek drama, and tended to be considered as a legitimate literary device<sup>(48)</sup>. We must not regard Aristotle as some kind of divine law-giver whose literary pontifications were sacrosanct. He was really only passing a personal judgement on the literary styles with which he was familiar.

<sup>(46)</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, VIII, 4.

<sup>(47)</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, IX, 11.

<sup>(48)</sup> The use of the *deus ex machina* as a means of plot resolution is a case in point. Aristotle bemoans its employment because it short-circuits the action rather than being caused by it (see the comments on Euripides' *Medea* in the *Poetics*, XV, 10), but it was nonetheless commonly — and intentionally — used by ancient dramatists. The empty tomb scene in Mark 16, 1-8 could be seen as a use of the device there.

Obviously, there is much else that Aristotle has to say about plot which, while certainly applicable to Mark's narrative, is not directly relevant to our present purpose, and which we must pass over<sup>(49)</sup>.

## 2. *Continuity and Suspension in the Markan Plot*

Although the causal factor does operate in the Markan narrative (for instance, the leper's disobedience regarding Jesus' injunction to silence causes Jesus to withdraw from centres of population [1,45]), it soon becomes evident from a perusal of the Gospel that the Evangelist is more concerned to operate on a temporal basis. Time, obviously, is a plot-related factor, too, but in Mark's hands it is used to control the pace of events. It is well known that the early chapters are shot through with uses of εὐθὺς, a word which is intended to convey the idea of movement and hurried action. The frequency with which the term is used, however, tends to decline in proportion to its position in the narrative. It occurs eleven times in Chapter One alone<sup>(50)</sup>, eighteen times in chapters 2–6<sup>(51)</sup>, seven times in chapters 7–10<sup>(52)</sup>, and only six times in chapters 11–16<sup>(53)</sup>.

This deceleration of narrative pace is suggested in other ways, too. We note that virtually the whole of Jesus' ministry — a span of some two years — is covered in chapters 1–10, while chapters 11–16 — approximately one third of the text — is devoted to the final week of Jesus' life, of which 14,12–15,39 covers the 24 hours up to his death. On the basis of proportionality, then, it is evident that the pace of the story decelerates markedly as the cross looms ever larger.

Again, the earlier part of the Gospel is characterised by short, vivid scenes which leave ample opportunity for a judicious use of ellipsis and summary. Mark tells us, for instance, that Jesus spent forty days in the desert, but says nothing of what happened there, other than that Satan tempted him (1,13). The same goes for the six days between the Confession at Caesarea Philippi and the

<sup>(49)</sup> There is, for instance, the affective factor — the power of the plot to arouse fear (φοβερός) and pity (ἐλεεινός) in the audience (Aristotle, *Poetics*, XIV, 1-2).

<sup>(50)</sup> Mark 1,10.12.18.20.21.23.28.29.30.42.43.

<sup>(51)</sup> Mark 2,8.12; 3,6; 4,5.15.16.17.29; 5,2.29.30.42 (bis); 6,25.27.45.50.54.

<sup>(52)</sup> Mark 7,25.35; 8,10; 9,15.20.24; 10,52.

<sup>(53)</sup> Mark 11,2.3; 14,43.45.72; 15,1.

Transfiguration (9,2). By contrast, the events of Passion week are meticulously logged, and the action proceeds hour by hour. Naturally, the odd ellipsis is inevitable, but by the time of the Crucifixion, the story is inching along by three-hour intervals until, at the moment of Jesus' death (15,39), time seems to grind to a halt. Jesus utters his cry of dereliction (15,34), the Temple curtain is torn (15,38), and the centurion affirms Jesus' identity — all in one time-ceased moment.

This survey of events, brief as it is, suggests that Mark is a skilled operator who is in supreme control of the narrative time factor. Against this background of temporal deceleration he appears, at certain strategic points, to suspend the action by one means or another. The word, notice, is "suspend", not "suspense". The latter, while not entirely absent from ancient literature<sup>(54)</sup>, is largely a modern device which is designed to keep the reader or audience guessing about the resolution of the plot. In Greek drama, the audience knew the outcome from the outset. The question was not: What will happen to the protagonist? so much as: How will the plotted events lead to the inevitable? Thus, in the case of Mark's Gospel, it is not a matter of whether or not Jesus will die, but of how one who, in the eyes of faith, was God's own son (1,1), could have been brought to the cross at all. The end was inevitable, but how did events conspire to make it so? That is what would have intrigued a first-century audience.

We will now note two instances of this "suspension" technique, and then see how this device could resolve our Bethsaida/Gennesaret problem. The first concerns Peter's confession (8,27-30). Back in 6,14-16, in what is perhaps a largely redactional passage, the question of Jesus' identity was considered. The options given were John the Baptist, Elijah, or "one of the prophets". Herod Antipas, incorrectly of course, chose the first of these. Now, in 8,27-30, the question is raised again, but it is not causally induced by anything which precedes it, and cannot strictly be regarded as part of a plotted sequence. It is true that the two-stage healing of the blind man (8,22-26) is really a paradigm for Peter's confession in the following

(54) G.E. DUCKWORTH, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius and Vergil* (Princeton 1933); G.N. SANDY, "Foreshadowing and Suspense in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*", *Classical Journal* 68 (1972-73) 232-235.

pericope, since, like the blind man, Peter, too, sees in two stages — impartially when, while recognising Jesus as Messiah, he fails to understand what messiahship entails; and then, so we assume, clearly when he understands the significance of Jesus' resurrection<sup>(55)</sup>. But the first of these narratives does not *causally* give rise to the second; they are simply juxtaposed for thematic effect. Be that as it may, there is at this point an element of stagnation because in reply to Jesus' question, "Who do men say that I am?" — which, be it noted, he initiates without any prompting from the preceding action — the disciples can do no more than repeat the alternatives offered in 6,14-16. Thus, the plotted action is at a standstill — in other words, it is suspended — and cannot proceed further unless a way is found out of the impasse. So Jesus must pose a further question: "But who do *you* say that I am?" (8,29). This enables Peter to provide the required answer, "You are the Christ", which, in turn, allows the plotted action to move forward into the second act of the drama (8,31-16,8). Peter has at last recognised Jesus to be the Messiah, but imperfectly so; now the question, "What *kind* of Messiah?" must be addressed. The story, then, proceeds, but only after a moment's suspension of the plot which makes the reader wonder where, if anywhere, it is going.

Another instance of this technique, though rather differently conceived, is the sequence of events leading to Jesus' death. It is clear that Jesus is in danger of arrest from the moment he arrives in Jerusalem, the city of his enemies; but Mark allows one opportunity after another to slip by before the arrest is finally made. The religious leaders feel unable to seize Jesus at first because he is surrounded by doting supporters by day (12,37b; 14,2), and leaves the city overnight (11,11.19). When eventually, with the opportune intervention of Judas (14,10-11.43-45), they do secure his arrest, the brief armed resistance by one of his followers (14,47) momentarily suggests the possibility of escape through revolt. When that does not transpire, it looks for a time as if the trial before the High Priest will collapse, for the witnesses cannot even agree among themselves, and Jesus need only remain silent to secure his release. But then, in

<sup>(55)</sup> The theological significance of the two-stage healing in Mark 8,22-26 is well-documented. See, for instance, R.H. LIGHTFOOT, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (London 1935) 90-91; LANE, *Mark*, 286-287; HOOKER, *Mark*, 198.

response to the High Priest's illegal question in 14,61 (which, incidentally, echoes Peter's earlier affirmation [8,29] in identical language — Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστός), Jesus utters his fatal ἐγώ εἰμι, thus condemning himself.

Next comes the trial before Pilate — and with it another opportunity for escape. The Governor can find no fault in him and wants to release him; but the priests poison the crowds against him, so that, amid the general clamour, Pilate capitulates and releases Barabbas instead (15,6-15). Now Jesus is taken to Golgotha and crucified, and the religious leaders mockingly invite him to descend from the cross (15,32). Ironically, of course, he could do just that, but that would be to defy his Father's will (14,36). Finally, he utters his great cry of dereliction (15,34), and the bystanders, misinterpreting his Aramaic, believe that he is calling for Elijah. Might not Elijah save him, even now? But, no! Jesus utters a loud cry and dies.

Thus, by means of skilfully holding back on the action, Mark keeps readers in suspense (here the word *can* be used legitimately) for several chapters. Jesus *will* die on the cross — but when?

### 3. *Markan Plot Suspension and the Bethsaida/Gennesaret Problem*

It is the contention of the present paper that the concept of plot suspension could be used as a key to solving the problem of the aborted sea-crossing in 6,45-53. The fact that the disciples seem all set to reach Bethsaida in 6,45, but do not in fact arrive until 8,22 looks suspiciously like an instance of Markan plot suspension — a holding back on the pace of the action similar to that in the examples discussed above. Why does he do it? Malbon's contention that the disciples had first to learn some hard lessons about the Gentile mission sounds attractive, particularly as Jesus appears always to interact with Jews in Galilee, and Gentiles beyond. The disciples are conspicuously absent from the story of Jesus' first foray into Gentile territory (5,1-20)<sup>(56)</sup>, and they also fade from the scene

<sup>(56)</sup> It is to be noted that although the disciples cross the lake with Jesus on the occasion of his visit to the land of the Gerasenes, and play an important support role in the Stilling of the Storm (4,35-41), the "they came" (ἦλθον) of 5,1 suddenly and unaccountably becomes, "And when *he* had come out of the boat..." (καὶ ἐξεληθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου...) in 5,2. The construction would lead the reader logically to the conclusion that



during the Gentile mission. By contrast, they are ever present in Galilee. Their failure to reach the other side could, then, be symptomatic of their aversion to Jesus' universalism. It is true that in the Feeding of the Four Thousand (8,1-10) they appear on the eastern shore for the first time, but even then, they have still not done so by crossing the lake and disembarking. The lake is the final barrier which must be *completely* traversed if they are to fully accept the Gentile mission. Before the disciples (and the narrative) can move forward, the plot must be suspended to allow them to learn an essential lesson.

So far, Malbon seems to be on the right lines, but perhaps she rather overstates the significance of the Gentile theme in 4,35–8,26. What she has identified, in effect, is a sub-plot which is subservient to the main thrust of the action which, at that point, is concerned with the question of Jesus' true identity. This is evident from the fact that the "bread" (ἄρτος) motif cuts across the concept of ethnic distinctiveness. When we look carefully at what it is the disciples do not understand, we see that it is not restricted to their resistance to the Gentile mission; it goes to the very heart of what is meant by "bread". Their difficulty with that issue is evident on *both* sides of the lake (6,37.52; 8,4) as well as on it (8,14-21), which suggests that it has to do with more than the Gentile question alone. The fundamental question is not who the bread is for, but who the all-sufficient bread is. In fact, it is not forcing the issue to say that the story of the disciples' reaction to Jesus' Gentile mission is symptomatic of their growing awareness of his messianic identity, and that it follows a similar narrative pattern. In the first case, the disciples' introverted Jewish consciousness suffers a rude awakening when they see Jesus taking his "bread" beyond the parameters of

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the disciples remained in the boat while only Jesus disembarked. The difficulty was noted at an early stage since the variant in 5,1 substituting the singular ἦλθεν for the plural ἦλθον (the former being the reading in <sup>8c</sup> vid CLΔΘ<sup>f</sup>1328.700.892.1241 *al q sy bo*; Epiph) was almost certainly prompted by the desire to reconcile that verse with the singular construction in the next. Be that as it may, it is clear that once Jesus has returned to the other side (εἰς τὸ πέραν, 5,21) the disciples slip quietly back into the picture. There are other explanations for this discrepancy, of course, such as the view that it was caused by the juxtaposition of a redactional plural in 5,1 with a traditional singular in 5,2; but even if this was so, it may still be significant that Mark allowed the incongruity to stand.

“Jewish” territory. They cannot accept this, so, by means of the series of object lessons listed by Malbon (see 7,1–8,10), he corrects their misunderstanding, and they come to see clearly. Similarly, the disciples do not at first see who Jesus is (4,41), but when they do (8,29) they are dismayed to find that messiahship is just the opposite of what they expected it to be (8,31–33). Thus, by means of a long series of object lessons and teaching sessions (8,31–10,45) Jesus sets out to correct their misunderstanding, thus enabling them to see clearly. The two-stage healing of the blind man (8,22–26) is thus paradigmatic of both these narrative sequences.

The aborted voyage of 6,45–53 can be seen, then, as an instance of Mark’s plot suspension tactic. In narrative terms, no progress can be made until the disciples have reached the “other side”. In 8,14–21, they are no nearer to understanding about the bread than they were in 8,4, or 6,52, or 6,37: everything depends on a successful crossing of the lake. The two-stage nature of the healing at Bethsaida and the two-stage attempt of the disciples to arrive there are parallel narrative constructions which are intended to underpin Mark’s overriding theological purpose. In accepting the universalism of the gospel, represented by the successful crossing of the lake, the disciples have also gained some partial insight into Jesus’ true identity. Although the material in 7,1–8,21 is formally diverse, consisting of a pronouncement story (8,14–21), controversy stories (7,1–23; 8,11–13) an exorcism (7,24–30), a healing (7,31–37), and a nature miracle (8,1–10), it is all parabolic in the sense that Jesus’ words and actions drive home to the disciples of the story world the lesson about the universal mission of Jesus (and hence the Church) which Mark no doubt wanted to convey to his own community. It is this community purpose, one feels, which underlies Mark’s narrative treatment of the sea-crossings, and helps one to understand why the disciples, having been sent by Jesus to Bethsaida in 6,45, arrive instead at Gennesaret in 6,53. This narrative-critical approach is, I submit, at least as plausible as any alternative solution to the problem.

24 Hamilton Court  
Chilston Road  
Tunbridge Wells, Kent  
TN4 9LN England

Stephen H. SMITH

## **The Characterization and Narrative Function of the Women at the Tomb (Mark 15,40-41.47; 16,1-8)**

This article investigates the manner in which the evocation of narrative frames in Mark 15,40-16,8 permits the construction of a complex and nuanced characterization of the women at the tomb<sup>(1)</sup>. A brief introduction examines the nature of semantic and narrative frames, their significance for narrative analysis, and the construct of the implied reader assumed in the analysis. The discussion then analyzes the words and phrases within 15,40-16,8 that have received special narrative development and modification in the previous narration. This analysis reveals that the story of the women re-presents significant elements of the characterization of the (male) disciples of Jesus and establishes narrative grounds for aligning the women with the disciples, from their earlier positive presentation to their final negative valuation. The discussion concludes by clarifying the narrative function of the women within the Gospel.

### **I. Semantic and Narrative Frames in Characterization**

Biblical commentators recognize that words may take on specialized connotations based on their use in particular biblical books. For example, the Marcan connotation of "way" (ὁδός) has a narratively specific set of meanings, relationships, and valuations that distinguish it not only from general Koine usage but also from its specialized connotations developed in the Septuagint<sup>(2)</sup>. The

<sup>(1)</sup> This investigation assumes that the Gospel (and the characterization of the women) ends at 16,8. The ending at 16,8 is supported by textual and literary considerations: K. ALAND, "Bemerkungen zum Schluss des Markusevangeliums", *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honor of Matthew Black* (eds. E. E. ELLIS – M. WILCOX) (Edinburgh 1969). 157-180 and B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart 1975) 122-128 (textual); and T. E. BOOMERSHINE – G. L. BARTHOLOMEW, "The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8", *JBL* 100/2 (1981) 213-223 (literary).

<sup>(2)</sup> Specialized connotations of "way" (*derek*) also may be found from book to book in the Hebrew Bible: cf. G. J. BOTTERWECK – H. RINGGREN, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. 3 (John T. Willis et al. trans.) (Grand Rapids 1978) 282-292.

narration of Mark modifies the pre-existent meaning of ὁδός by establishing the specific points of information that the way is the Lord's (God's/Jesus') (1,2-3; cf. Mal 3,1; Exod 23,20), that the word (seed) is sown along the way (4,4.14), that the way affords little security (a staff but no bread or bag, etc.), is potentially dangerous, but also is a way of authority (6,7), and that the potential dangers of the way may be remedied by the intervention of Jesus (8,3). The same passages also establish relationships between Jesus and God (1,2-3), Jesus and David (2,23; cf. 1 Sam 2,1-6), and Jesus and the twelve insofar as the twelve undertake the task of proclaiming (κηρύσσω) repentance (μετανοέω) formerly ascribed to Jesus (1,14-15) and receive their authority from Jesus (6,7). The narrative also asserts a positive valuation of the way and those who are productive on it (4,8.20).

The generation of such specialized connotations for words may be explained in terms of the modification of pre-existent semantic frames. Semantic frames make available to speakers and interpreters three categories of data: (1) points of information concerning the particular words accommodated by the frame, (2) relationships among these words and reference to other frames containing these words, and (3) perspectives for apprehending and (e)valuating the function of these words and expectations for their content<sup>(3)</sup>. The example of the Marcan usage of "way" assumes that original interpreters (hereafter, readers) had a pre-existent knowledge of the general Koine usage of ὁδός and of the Septuagintal modifications to this general connotation. The original reader's encounter of this word in the Gospel would evoke for that reader pre-existent points of information, relationships, and perspectives for valuation; and the narration itself would establish the basis for specializing these pre-existent frames along certain lines.

Within a narrative, the repeated evocation of frames and their modification along specific lines plays a rhetorical function by raising particular points of information, relationships, and perspectives for valuation to prominence. Such narratively-modified semantic frames (hereafter, narrative frames) may be evoked in the

<sup>(3)</sup> C. J. FILLMORE, "Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences: Conference on the Origin and Development of Language and Speech* 280 (1976) 13. An example of how semantic frames impose perspectives and expectations appears in C. J. FILLMORE, "The Need for a Frame Semantics Within Linguistics", *Statistical Methods in Linguistics* (1976) 20.

reader whenever particular words appear in the subsequent narration. At the time their points of information, relationships and perspectives for valuation establish a narratively specific basis for characterization and/or description and perspectives for valuating (positively, negatively, or neutrally) particular characters and events<sup>(4)</sup>.

The distinction between the pre-existent content of frames and their narratively generated content engenders a distinction of two different aspects of the implied reader; the authorial audience and the narrative audience<sup>(5)</sup>. The authorial audience is the audience for which the real author designs a work by making assumptions about the real reader's pre-existent beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with literary conventions<sup>(6)</sup>. The narrative audience in contrast possesses particular beliefs, knowledge, and literary competence developed by the text<sup>(7)</sup>. My analysis emphasizes the investigation of narrative

(4) The notion of the narrative frame has entered into the writings of several literary theorists: M. PERRY, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meanings", *Poetics Today* 1:1-2 (1979) 36; U. ECO, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington 1979) 20-21, 37; R. ALTER, *Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (New York 1989) 122. The use of narrative frames, though not this precise designation, appears in recent Marcan scholarship: S. R. JOHN, "The Identity and Significance of the neaniskos in Mark", *Forum* 8 (1992) 123-139 and P. J. HARTIN, "The Role of the women disciples in Mark's narrative", *TheEv* 26/2 (1993) 94-95.

(5) The distinction between the authorial audience and the narrative audience receives development in P. RABINOWITZ, "Truth in Fiction", *Critical Inquiry* (1974) 126-133; cf. P. RABINOWITZ, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Poetics of Interpretation* (Ithaca 1987) 26-27.

(6) A detailed treatment of the beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions of the authorial audience appears in E. BEST, "Mark's Readers: A Profile", *The Four Gospels*, Vol. II (eds. F. VAN SEGBROECK et al.) (Leuven 1992) 839-855.

(7) RABINOWITZ, "Truth", 127-133. Treatment of a third possible aspect of the implied reader, the ideal narrative audience, which arises in the context of unreliable narration (127-128), is omitted; for there is significant scholarly consensus that the narrator of Mark is reliable: cf. R. FOWLER, *Loaves and Fishes: The Function of the Feeding Stories in the Gospel of Mark* (Ann Arbor, MI 1981) 229; R. C. TANNEHILL, "The Disciples of Jesus: The Function of a Narrative Role", *JR* 57 (1977) 390-391; N. R. PETERSEN, "'Point of View' in Mark's Narrative", *Semeia* 12 (1978) 105-111; D. RHOADS - D. MICHIE, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia 1988) 39.

frames; for they reflect most clearly points, relationships, and valuations that the narration cultivates in the implied reader<sup>(8)</sup>.

## II. Analysis of the Characterization of the Women at the Tomb

This investigation examines the content of the frames evokes by the words and phrases of Mark 15,40-41.47 and 16,1-8 that have received redundant prior modification in the Gospel.

### *Mark 15,40-41*

And there were women observing from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary, [wife] of James the lesser and the mother of Josés, and Salome, who when he was in Galilee, used to follow him and serve him, and many others going up with him to Jerusalem. (vv. 40-41)

The characterization of the women begins in 15,40 with the notice that "there were women observing from a distance". The word, "women" (γυναῖκες), evokes frames modified in the narration of the stories of the woman with a flow of blood (5,25.33), the Syro-phenician woman (7,25.26), and the woman who anoints Jesus (14,3). Each of these characters received a positive valuation: the woman with a flow of blood receives healing because she has faith (5,34); the Syrophenician woman received Jesus' commendation for her statement and the expulsion of the demon from her daughter (7,29); and the woman whose anointing prepares Jesus for burial will have her deed remembered wherever the gospel is proclaimed (14,9)<sup>(9)</sup>. These frames impose a positive valuation on the characters, Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Salome.

<sup>(8)</sup> Particular words and phrases have only a potential to evoke the noted frames. The actual evocation of frames depends on a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors: the implied author's success in constructing frames earlier in the narration and in establishing sufficient grounds for their later evocation; the attentiveness of the reader both at the original modification of frames and at a later point when the narration may evoke them; and the adequacy of the medium of narration (the spoken word, the quality of the text). My contention is not that every or any reader would be aware of the content of each frame discussed but that a close reading of the entire text would establish adequate grounds for the evocation of the frames that receive attention.

<sup>(9)</sup> Γυνή also evokes a second set of frames associated with the connotation, "wife". I omit this discussion because the subsequent

“From a distance” (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν) has appeared three times earlier, twice with the verb of seeing, ὁράω. In 5,6 the man possessed by Legion initially sees (ἰδὼν) Jesus from a distance and prostrates himself before Jesus; and his ultimate actions are asking to be with Jesus (5,18)<sup>(10)</sup> and proclaiming what the Lord has done for him (5,20). In 8,3 Jesus notes that some in the great crowd coming from a distance have nothing to eat and in response feeds them (8,8). In 11,13 Jesus sees (ἰδὼν) a fig tree in leaf from a distance and curses the tree so that it withers (11,20). Since Jesus’ actions to this point have received consistently positive valuation and the demoniac’s presentation aligns him with Jesus, the frames evoked by “from a distance” impose a positive valuation on the women, strengthening their previous positive valuation.

“Observing” (θεωροῦσαι) evokes frames establishing ambiguous relationships and imposing ambiguous valuation. In the former occurrences, the verbal subjects, unclean spirits (3,11) and those who observe the former demoniac and ask Jesus to leave their territory (5,17), receive negative valuation. In the latter occurrences, Jesus, who receives positive valuation, observes a commotion (5,38) and the crowd putting money into the treasury (12,41). Though the frames evoked by θεωροῦσαι do not contribute significantly to the women’s characterization at this time, the narration of 15,40-41 introduces the point of information that the women received a positive valuation in the context of its appearance here. In the future, this verb will have the potential to evoke frames imposing a positive valuation on the women<sup>(11)</sup>.

The remainder of v.40 identifies the women as Mary Magdalene, Mary [wife] of James the lesser and the mother of Joses, and Salome. Since no character with these precise designations has

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narration indicates that “woman” is the intended connotation here. The frames associated with the connotation, “wife”, were generated in the narration of the statement about Herodias (6,17.18), the argument on divorce (10,2.7.11), and the argument on the resurrection (12,19a.19b.20.22.23).

<sup>(10)</sup> “Being with Jesus” (μετὰ [Ἰησοῦ] εἶναι) is one of the major thematic concerns of 3,13–6,6a: P. DANOVE, *The End of Mark’s Story: A Methodological Study* (New York 1993) 258; cf. K. STOCK, *Boten aus dem Mit-Ihm Sein: Das Verhältnis zwischen Jesus und den Zwölf nach Markus* (AnBib 70; Rome 1975) 7-70.

<sup>(11)</sup> Words or phrases evoking frames that impose ambiguous valuation and do not contain points of information or relationships significant to the subsequent narration are omitted.

appeared previously, the narration evokes no frames to assist in identification and valuation<sup>(12)</sup>. However, since such appeals to the knowledge of the authorial audience that do not offer explicit information implying a negative valuation (as with Herodias) consistently occur in contexts of positive valuation (1,16.19; 3,17.18), the narration of v.40b indicates that the noted association with James the lesser and Joses is intended to support a positive valuation of the second Mary.

“Galilee” (Γαλιλαία), as distinct from “Sea of Galilee”, has eight previous occurrences (1,9.14.28.39; 3,7; 6,21; 9,30; 14,28) recalling that many followed Jesus from Galilee (3,7) and that, after he is raised, Jesus will go before the disciples to Galilee (14,28)<sup>(13)</sup>.

The verb, “followed” (ἠκολούθουν), a key Marcan qualification of discipleship, evokes frames imposing a positive valuation on the subject when the object is Jesus (1,18; 2,14.15; 3,7; 5,24; 6,1; 8,34; 10,21.28.52; 11,9; 14,54) and establishing relationships aligning the women with Jesus and his disciples, especially in the more positive aspects of the disciples’ presentation<sup>(14)</sup>.

In the active voice, “served” (διηκόνουν) previously had the subjects, angels (1,13), Simon’s mother-in-law (1,31) and Son of Man (10,45b), each of whom received positive valuation. The lone passive voice occurrence, “the Son of Man did not come to be served” (10,45a), engenders a negative valuation of those serving Jesus. This singular contradictory valuation, however, is not able to reverse the previously established positive valuation (1,13.31)

<sup>(12)</sup> The authorial audience may have been able to associate James the lesser with [the son] of Zebedee and brother of John (1,19; 3,17; 10,35-40), [the son] of Alphaeus (3,18), or the brother of Jesus (6,3) or Joses with the brother of Jesus (6,3); but the contemporary real reader does not have sufficient grounds to do so.

<sup>(13)</sup> The remaining six occurrences of “Galilee” establish the points of information that (1) Jesus comes from Nazareth of Galilee (1,9); (2) Jesus proclaims the gospel of God in Galilee (1,14); (3) Jesus’ fame spread throughout Galilee (1,28); (4) Jesus preaches and drives out demons in synagogues throughout Galilee (1,39); (5) Herod gave a banquet for the leading men of Galilee (6,21); and (6) Jesus journeyed through Galilee (9,30).

<sup>(14)</sup> These frames also establish the point that the women and the many others may be among those from Galilee who heard about the things he was doing and came to him (3,7-8).



without further narrative justification<sup>(15)</sup>. Until such appears, the associated frames continue to impose a positive valuation.

The phrase, “into Jerusalem” (εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα), evokes frames (10,32.33; 11,1.11.15.27) imposing a generally positive valuation on those who go to Jerusalem.

The analysis indicates that the frames evoked by the narration of 15,40-41 impose positive valuations on the women, establish relationships aligning the women with Jesus and his disciples, especially in the more positive aspects of the disciples’ characterization, and suggest that the authorial audience has a pre-existing knowledge and positive valuation of the women.

### *Mark 15,42-47*

After introducing the women, the narrator turns to the burial of Jesus (15,42-47). Since the women appear only in v. 47, a detailed analysis of vv. 42-46 is omitted; and information from these verses is introduced only when it belongs to the frames evoked by the subsequent narration.

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the [mother] of Joses were observing where he was placed. (v. 47)

The women are reintroduced in v. 47. Though Salome is absent from this scene, the names, Mary Magdalene and Mary the [mother] of Joses, evoke frames that relate these women to Salome and impose a positive valuation on all three women based on their last narrated actions.

The verb, “were observing” (ἐθεώρουν), evokes frames (15,40) reasserting the women’s positive valuation and recalling their relationship to Salome.

“Was placed” (τέθειται) on the heels of the previous “placed him in a tomb” (14,46) imposes a positive valuation on the doer of

(15) PERRY, “Literary Dynamics”, 37, notes, “The frame serves as a guiding norm in the encounter with the text, as a negative defining principle, so that deviation from it becomes perceptible and requires motivation by another frame or principle”. Modifying the narratively generated valuation at this point would require the redundant application of narrative techniques. Since the following clause (10,45b) again emphasizes a positive valuation for the subject, the valuation implied within 10,45a has only local impact until further narrative grounds are provided for modifying these frames.

the action, Joseph of Arimathea. Though the women are not agents in this activity, their observation of the action establishes at least a tenuous relationship to Joseph, whose actions in burying Jesus received positive valuation. However, the positive valuation of the women implicit in this relationship remains contingent on whether the subsequent narration aligns or contrasts the women with Joseph.

*Mark 16,1-8*

The narration now focuses on events at the tomb. After the narration of the women's preparations for and journey to the tomb (vv. 1-4), the portrayal of the women is linked to another character, the young man (vv. 5-7). The women's interaction with the young man and their response to his message (v. 8) provide the final contribution to the women's characterization.

And when the Sabbath passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary the [wife] of James and Salome bought aromatic spices in order that, when they came, they might anoint him. And very early in the morning of the first [day] of the week they come upon the tomb when the sun is rising. And they were saying to each other, "Who will roll back for us the stone from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they observe that the stone has been rolled back; for it was very large. (vv. 1-4)

"When the Sabbath passed" (διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου) evokes frames relating this scene to the previous scene that took place the day before the Sabbath (15,42). The word, "Sabbath" (σαββάτου), which has frequent previous attestation (1,21; 2,23.24.27a.27b.28; 3,2.4; 6,2), evokes frames raising an expectation of conflict between Jesus and his opponents: an unclean spirit (1,23); Pharisees (2,24); Pharisees and Herodians (3,6); and the people of his native place (6,1-2). These frames impose a negative valuation on such opponents.

The narration of the women's names evokes frames strengthening the coordination of the previous scene and this scene and recalling the women's previous positive valuation.

"Bought" (ἡγόρασαν) strengthens the women's alignment with Joseph (15,46) and imposes a positive valuation of the women. Though the narrative contains no previous reference to "aromatic spices (or oils)" (ἀρώματα), the evocation of pre-existent frames of the authorial audience would confirm that the women were following the appropriate actions for preparing a body. However,

Jesus' previous statement that another has anointed (14,3) his body for burial (14,8) raises the possibility for the narrative audience that the women's proposed activity may prove to be superfluous. This introduces a point of ambiguity into the women's otherwise appropriate actions.

The frames evoked by "anoint" (ἀλείψωσιν) recall that the Twelve anointed many sick people with oil and cured them (6,13) and so strengthen the women's alignment with the positive aspects of the disciples' characterization. The action of anointing also evokes frames indicating that this may not be the most appropriate form of anointing the dead, at least in this narrative; for in 14,3 the narrator employs a different verb for this activity, καταχέω, which Jesus identifies as a preparation for his burial. Thus these frames include both positive and potentially negative points and impose an ambiguous valuation on the women's activity.

"In the morning" (πρωί) evokes frames imposing a generally positive valuation on the women. These frames contain the points of information that the morning is the time of Jesus' rising to pray (1,35), Jesus' action of cursing the fig tree (11,20), the master's coming (13,35), and the chief priests, scribes, and elders' plots against Jesus (15,1). In the first three occurrences, the one who acts in the morning receives a positive valuation; whereas the agents in the final occurrence receive negative valuation. This singular contrary valuation is not sufficient to overturn the previously established positive valuation but does establish the potential for their negative valuation, should the subsequent narration align them with the religious authorities.

Though the phrase, "on the first [day] of the week (Sabbaths)" (τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων), has no previous occurrence in the narrative, the repetition of "Sabbath" (cf. v. 1) again raises the potential for conflict between Jesus and his opponents.

The word, "tomb" (μνημεῖον) evokes frames, last modified in 15,46. These frames strengthen the women's alignment with Joseph and impose a positive valuation on the women.

"Who will roll back for us the stone from the entrance of the tomb" (Τίς ἀποκυλίσει ... μνημείου), evokes frames from the narration of 15,46 in which προσκυλίσει, the only other verb in the narrative sharing the same root as ἀποκυλίσει, was one of the positively valued actions of Joseph. This phrase strengthens the women's alignment with Joseph.

The word, “looking up” (ἀναβλέψασαι), evokes frames indicating that this action always precedes significant actions of Jesus: feeding the crowd (6,41), opening the deaf man’s ears (7,34), and healing the blind man (8,24)<sup>(16)</sup>. With Jesus as the subject, the action benefits other characters (6,41; 7,34); and with another character as subject, the action benefits that character (8,24). These frames impose an expectation of an action by Jesus that will benefit the women.

“Observe” (θεωροῦσιν; cf. 15,40.47) imposes a positive valuation on the women.

The phrase, “the stone has been rolled back” (ἀποκεκύλισται ὁ λίθος), resolves the focus of the women’s concern in v. 3. The absence of an agent of the action raises the possibility that the women’s recently strengthened relationship with Joseph, who originally rolled the stone across the entrance, may be superseded by a relationship with another character who has completed this action. Since the women have come to anoint Jesus (16,1) and someone else has preceded them to the tomb, the possibility raised by the verb, ἀλείφω, that this action may prove to be superfluous, again comes to the fore. The notice about the disposition of the stone interjects significant uncertainty into the narration and raises the possibility of a negative valuation of the women and their actions.

“For it was very large” (ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα), constitutes an explanatory γάρ clause, one of the primary means of establishing reliable narration and grounding textual meaning in the Gospel<sup>(17)</sup>. Such clauses permit direct access to the values and beliefs of the reliable narrator and so to the implied author and are one of the narrator’s primary sources of reliable commentary about characters’ understanding and motivations<sup>(18)</sup>. The majority of these clauses

<sup>(16)</sup> The word, “looking up” (ἀναβλέψασαι), also evokes frames relating to a second connotation, “(re)gain sight” (10,51.52).

<sup>(17)</sup> BOOMERSHINE – BARTHOLOMEW, “Narrative Technique”, 214: cf. FOWLER, *Loaves and Fishes*, 157-175; and RHOADS – MICHIE, *Mark as Story*, 45-51.

<sup>(18)</sup> The proficiency to recognize explanatory γάρ clauses and to employ the information narrated within them belongs to the literary competence of the authorial audience that has a pre-existent familiarity with such comments in the Septuagint: cf. S. BAR-EFRAI, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTSS 70; Sheffield 1989) 30-31, on their presence in the Hebrew Scriptures. However, the frequency with which the narrator employs these clauses grounds the generation of a proficiency of the

(25 of 31 so far) are comments about four characters or groups of characters: Jesus, his disciples, religious authorities, and Herod. Except in the case of Jesus, the other characters receive either consistently negative (religious authorities) or increasingly negative (disciples and Herod) valuation through them<sup>(19)</sup>.

And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right wrapped in a robe, and they were amazed. And he says to them. "Don't be amazed: you seek Jesus the Nazarean, the crucified; he was raised and is not here; see the place where they placed him. But go, say to his disciples and to Peter 'He goes before you to Galilee; there you will see him as he said to you'". (vv. 5-7)

The phrase, "entering into the tomb" (εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον), reconfirms the women's relationship with Joseph and reasserts their earlier positive valuation.

"Young man" (νεανίσκον) evokes frames (14,51-52) recalling that a young man followed along with (συνηκολούθει) Jesus, was wrapped (περιβεβλημένος) in a linen cloth, and fled (ἔφυγεν) as did those with Jesus at his arrest (14,50). "Follow along with" (σύν + ἀκολουθεῖω) establishes a direct relationship with Jesus'

narrative audience that comes to rely on such comments to assist in interpretation. FOWLER, *Loaves and Fishes*, 162-164, notes the contribution of explanatory γάρ clauses to the reliable commentary of the Gospel narrative.

<sup>(19)</sup> In this presentation citations to the left of the slash indicate positive or neutral valuation; and citations to the right of the slash indicate negative valuation:

	<i>positive, neutral valuation / negative valuation</i>	
1. disciples (10):	disciples:	3,10; 6,48 / 6,50.52; 9,34; 10,45
	Peter:	/ 9,6a
	Peter, Andrew (James, John):	1,16 /
	Peter, James, John:	/ 9,6b; 14,40
2. authorities (7):	chief priests, scribes:	/ 11,18a; 14,2
	chief priests, scribes/elders:	/ 11,32; 12,12
	chief priests, the Sanhedrin:	/ 14,56
	Pharisees, scribes:	/ 7,3
	chief priests:	/ 15,10
3. Herod (4):		6,14 / 6,17.18.20
4. Jesus (6):	1,22; 3,10; 5,8; 9,31; 11,13; 12,12 /	

Characters receiving one narratorial comment are people in a synagogue in Capernaum (1,22), those at Levi's house (2,15), those with Jesus (3,21), demons (5,8), the woman with the flow of blood (5,28), Jairus' daughter (5,42), Herodias (6,20), the man with many possessions (10,22), and the crowd (11,18b).

disciples, especially Peter, James, and John (5,37), an indirect relationship with the other disciples (1,18; 2,14.15; 3,7; 5,24; 6,1; 8,34; 10,21.28.52; 11,9; 14,54) and subsequently the women (15,41) and imposes a positive valuation on the young man. "Wrapped" (περιβεβλημένον) in a garment strengthens the alignment of this young man and the previous one (14,51). There (14,52) the young man's fleeing aligned him with Jesus' disciples precisely at the point of their most negative valuation (14,50) and imposed a negative valuation on the young man. Thus the young man's valuation in 14,51-52 was ambiguous; and his newly established alignment with the women extends this ambiguous valuation to them.

The phrase, "sitting at the right" (καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιούσις), recalls that James and John asked to sit at Jesus' right (ἐκ δεξιῶν ... καθίσωμεν) and left in his glory and were told by Jesus that this honor is not his to give (10,37-40), that Jesus cited scripture (Ps 110,1), making an implicit claim that he is the one sitting at God's right (κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν) until God places his enemies beneath his feet (12,36), and that Jesus told the chief priest (and the whole Sanhedrin, 14,55) that they will see the Son of Man seated at the right (ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον) of power and coming with the clouds of heaven (14,62; cf. Ps 110,1; Dan 7,13). The conjunction of "sit" and "right" evokes frames establishing a relationship aligning the young man with Jesus, the only other character to successfully sit at/on the right, and imposing a positive valuation on the young man<sup>(20)</sup>.

"Robe" (στολήν), recalls Jesus' warning about the Pharisees who go around in long robes (12,38). Though the Pharisees receive negative valuation, this may not accrue to the young man whose robe is not long and whose action is different. The word, "white" (λευκήν), too, has appeared once previously (9,3) in describing Jesus' clothes during his transfiguration. This strengthens the young man's alignment with Jesus and positive valuation.

With the notice that the women "were amazed" (ἐξεθαμβήθησαν), the narration again places the women in the foreground. The verb recalls that the crowd who saw Jesus after his transfiguration were amazed (9,15) and that Jesus himself began to be

<sup>(20)</sup> This relationship is surprising because the young man is only the third (after John the Baptist and Jesus) recurrent (14,51-52; 16,5-7) speaking character (16,6-7) who receives such a direct, positively valued relationship to God.

amazed and distressed in Gethsemane (14,33). Since Jesus refers to those who were amazed as a faithless generation (9,18), the former occurrence appears in the context of a negative valuation of the crowd. When this word reappears in 14,33 with Jesus as the subject, it evokes frames imposing a negative valuation on Jesus' action<sup>(21)</sup>. Though this negative valuation of Jesus' action is specifically negated in 14,36 when Jesus embraces God's will and not his own, the verb continues to evoke frames imposing a negative valuation; and this valuation accrues to the women.

As a positively valued character aligned with Jesus and God, the young man's commentary provides reliable narration. Thus "Don't be amazed" (Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε) carries the implied author's warrant that this action is inappropriate and to be negatively valued.

The initial occurrence of "seek" (ζητεῖτε) appeared in an ambiguous context (1,37). The remaining eight occurrences appear in contexts placing a negative valuation on the verb's subject: Jesus' mother and brothers (3,32); the Pharisees/this generation who seek a sign from heaven (8,11.12); the chief priests and scribes who seek how to destroy Jesus (11,18); the chief priests, scribes, and elders who seek to arrest Jesus (12,12; cf. 11,27); the chief priests and scribes who seek to arrest Jesus and put him to death (14,1); Judas who was seeking how he might hand over Jesus (14,11); and the priests and the entire Sanhedrin who seek testimony against Jesus to kill him (14,55). Thus this verb evokes frames placing a negative valuation on the women.

The remainder of the verse contains vocabulary primarily concerned with Jesus<sup>(22)</sup>. By focusing the implied reader's attention away from recent developments and back to Jesus' ministry (1,24; 10,47), his trial before the Sanhedrin (14,67) and the events immediately precipitating his death, the narrator establishes a context in which the coming notice that "he was raised" (ἠγέρθη) can have its optimal impact<sup>(23)</sup>.

<sup>(21)</sup> This negative valuation of Jesus' action is insufficient to reorder the overwhelmingly positive prior valuation of Jesus and his actions in the narrative to this point but does provide one of the few examples of negatively valued actions of Jesus in the narrative.

<sup>(22)</sup> The word, "Nazarean" (Ναζαρηνὸν), is a uniquely identifying designation of Jesus (1,24; 10,47; 14,67); and "crucified" (ἐσταυρωμένον) evokes frames generated in the narration of the three scenes leading up to Jesus' death (15,13.14.15; 15,20; and 15,24.25.27).

<sup>(23)</sup> The verb, ἠγέρθη, evokes frames containing the points of informa-

“Place” (τόπος), when not joined with “desolate” (ἐρημος, 1,35.45; 6,31.32.35), refers to a location where the disciples are not welcomed (6,11) or where there are earthquakes before the end (13,8) or to Golgotha (15,22). Each of these places receives negative valuation.

The final verb, “placed” (ἐθηκεν), evokes frames last modified in 15,47. There the women receive a tentatively positive valuation through their tenuous association with Joseph. The narration of vv. 1-4a tended to support the women’s alignment with Joseph; but, beginning in v. 4b, the narration began to establish grounds for disassociating the women, with their increasingly ambiguous valuation, from Joseph, whose valuation remains positive.

Previously (1,44; 2,11; 5,19; 6,38; 7,29; 8,33; 10,21.52; 11,2; 14,13) only Jesus issued the command, “go” (ὑπάγετε). This strengthens the young man’s positive valuation. Since, except in the cases of the former leper (1,45) and rich man (10,22), those so ordered fulfilled this command, the frames evoked by the verb engender an expectation that the women will go and do as commanded and impose on them a positive valuation that is contingent on their compliance<sup>(24)</sup>.

Since the previous occurrences (11,3; 13,4; 14,4) of the command, “say” (εἰπατε), also have resulted in compliance, the frames evoked by this word strengthen the expectation of the women’s compliance and contingently impose a positive valuation on them. However, the verb also evokes frames indicating that on three other occasions Jesus ordered (using a subjunctive, not an imperative construction) people not to speak; and these orders were

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tion that Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter (5,41) who had died (5,35), that Herod and others believed that John had been raised from the dead (6,14.16), that Jesus raised the boy (9,27) who became like a corpse so that many people said that he was dead (9,26), that Moses’ writings support the belief that the dead are raised (12,26), and that, after he is raised, Jesus will go before the disciples to Galilee (14,28).

<sup>(24)</sup> As an imperative address to the women, the narration of 16,7 has the potential to evoke frames whose ultimate imposition of valuation depends on the women’s successful completion of the command. This contingency holds only for the complements of verbs in the imperative mood and the content of imperative clauses. In contrast the young man’s action in commanding the women constitutes a real action capable of evoking frames that impose valuations directly.



not obeyed (1,44; 7,36) cf. 8,30). Thus these frames raise the possibility that the command to speak may not be fulfilled.

The phrase, “his disciples and Peter” (μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ), reintroduces the characters who have been absent from explicit mention since 14,50 as a group and since 14,72 in the case of Peter. This reintroduction is especially important to the authorial audience, which has a very positive pre-existent relationship with and valuation of the disciples and Peter and has proved extremely resistant to the implied author’s construction of the narrative audience’s ambivalent relationship with them<sup>(25)</sup>. The authorial audience has a pre-existing expectation for the rehabilitation of the disciples and Peter, and the narration has established the potential for their rehabilitation for the narrative audience through Jesus’ statement, “after being raised, I will go before you to Galilee” (14,28). The reintroduction of this group establishes a direct relationship between the women and Jesus’ disciples and focuses the implied reader’s attention on the women as the characters whose message may save the day for the disciples. Thus the reintroduction of the disciples and Peter, whose ultimate valuation is of great importance to both the authorial and narrative audiences, establishes a strong expectation that the women will carry out the command to tell the disciples the content of the following message and contingently imposes a very positive valuation of the women precisely on the condition that they fulfill the command.

“He goes before you to Galilee” (προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν), recalls Jesus’ statement to the disciples before his arrest (14,28). The frames evoked by this statement impose a positive valuation on the young man who repeats Jesus’ words, increase the expectation that the women will convey the message, and heighten the stakes for the women’s ultimate valuation based on their fulfillment of the command.

The frames evoked by “you will see” (ὄψεσθε) recall that in the future tense this verb has had as its object only the Son of Man: either coming on clouds (13,26) or seated at the right of power and coming with clouds (14,62). These frames contain references to frames recently evoked by the phrase, “seated at the right” (16,5)

<sup>(25)</sup> A discussion of the points of information, knowledge, and beliefs that characterize the authorial and narrative audiences and the divergences between the two appears in DANOVE, *The End of Mark’s Story*, 182-183.

that also contain references to the Son of Man and clouds. These factors strengthen the positive valuation of the young man, the expectation of rehabilitation for the disciples and Peter, and the contingently positive valuation of the women.

The phrase, "as he said to you" (καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν), seeks to prod to remembrance the disciples and Peter, the referents of "you", and the narrative audience (lest the association with 14,28 be missed!) that Jesus has made this statement earlier, thereby highlighting the reliability of its content. This assertion of reliability again strengthens the young man's positive valuation, the expectation of the rehabilitation of the disciples and Peter, and the women's positive valuation that remains contingent on their fulfillment of the command.

And leaving they fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment was holding them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (v.8)

"Fled" (ἔφυγον) recalls that the ones tending pigs fled at the drowning of their herds (5,14), that the proper time for flight is when the Temple is desecrated (13,14), that the disciples fled at Jesus' arrest (14,50), and that the young man fled when those arresting Jesus tried to seize him (14,52). Since the young man's message constitutes reliable narration about Jesus, the women's flight (and silence) is an inappropriate response and results in their negative valuation. The frames evoked by ἔφυγον confirm the women's negative valuation and strengthen their alignment with the disciples, whose flight also received negative valuation, and contrasting them to the young man, whose original ambiguous valuation (14,51-52) has become positive in 16,5-7.

As noted previously, the women's observation of Joseph's actions at the tomb established a tenuous relationship aligning them with Joseph; and vv. 1-4a strengthened this alignment. The narration of vv. 4b-7 introduced significant ambiguity and contingency into the women's presentation, contrasted them with Joseph, and confirmed the alignment of the young man with Joseph through their positively valued actions at the tomb. Since the women's flight is negatively valued, the frames evoked by "tomb" heighten the contrast between the positively valued actions of the young man and Joseph and the negatively valued action of the women and disciples<sup>(26)</sup>.

<sup>(26)</sup> These frames also establish a relationship contrasting the disciples of John the Baptist, whose actions at John's tomb received positive valua-

“Trembling” (τρόμος; cf. τρέμω, 5,33), and the frames evoked by “amazement” (ἐκστασις, cf. 5,42) confirm the negative valuation of the women<sup>(27)</sup>. The link between ἐκστασις and “amaze” (ἐξίστημι), generated in the narration of 5,42, strengthens the women’s alignment with the disciples whose reaction of amazement (6,51) receives harshly negative valuation through the explanatory γάρ clause in 6,52. The explanatory γάρ clause, “for trembling astonishment was holding them” (εἶχεν γὰρ ... ἐκστασις), evokes frames aligning the women with the characters whose negative valuation was generated through such clauses (Jesus’ disciples, Herod, and the religious authorities) and establishing an expectation that the women’s valuation will remain negative hereafter. Thus each set of frames further increases the negative valuation of the women and strengthens their alignment with Jesus’ disciples in the most negative aspects of their portrayal.

“They said nothing to anyone” (οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν) frustrates the expectation for the rehabilitation of the disciples and Peter and imposes a negative valuation on the women insofar as they fail to fulfill the command to pass on the message. The clause also evokes frames recalling that Jesus twice ordered people to say nothing to anyone (1,44; 7,36) and was not obeyed. This engenders a readerly apprehension that the women are the brunt of irony; for this direct command to speak (εἶπατε) is neglected after previous commands not to speak were unable to achieve silence (1,44; 7,36; cf. 8,30). The apprehension of irony is heightened by the further point of information that Jesus has established the time after he is raised as the proper time to narrate (9,9), extending the irony to Peter, James, and John; for the women through their silence remove the possibility for these disciples to fulfill their mandate to narrate the events of the transfiguration<sup>(28)</sup>.

“They were afraid” (ἐφοβοῦντο), which appears eleven times previously (4,41; 5,15.33.36; 6,20.50; 9,32; 10,32; 11,18.32; 12,12), imposes a very negative valuation on the women. Earlier (4,41) the

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tion (6,29), and the women, whose actions at Jesus’ tomb are inappropriate and receive negative valuation.

<sup>(27)</sup> C. H. GIBLIN, “The Beginning of the Ongoing Gospel (Mk 1,2-16,8)”. *The Four Gospels 1992* (Leuven 1992) Vol. II, 982, n.2, links “amazement” and “fear” to a lack of faith.

<sup>(28)</sup> D. O. VIA, “Irony as Hope in Mark’s Gospel: A Reply to Werner Kelber”, *Semeia* 48 (1988) 22.

disciples' fear is related to their lack of faith (4,40). The Gerasenes' fear (5,15) leads them to ask that Jesus go from their region, indicating that they do not want to be with Jesus, a central theme of 3,13–6,6a. The fear (and trembling) of the woman with the flow of blood (5,33) originally prevents her from responding to Jesus. In 5,36 and 6,50 Jesus commands Jairus and the disciples respectively not to fear, indicating that this response is inappropriate: in 6,52 the narrator advises that the disciples' fear stems from a lack of understanding and hardness of heart. Herod's fear (6,20) of the reliable character, John, occurs in the context of his statements that he had John beheaded (6,16) and imprisoned John for speaking God's word (6,17-18; cf. Lev 18,16). In 9,32 the narrator coordinates the disciples' fear with their lack of understanding. The fear of those following Jesus (10,32) contradicts Jesus' earlier command to the disciples (6,50) whose defining quality is following Jesus (1,18ff; cf. 9,34). Various religious authorities fear Jesus (11,18) or the crowd (11,32; 12,12) that esteems the reliable characters, Jesus (11,18) and John (11,32). The lone occurrence of the related word, *fearful* (ἐκφοβός, 9,6), appears on the heels of the narrator's statement that Peter does not know what to say. Thus φοβέομαι evokes frames imposing a very negative valuation on the women<sup>(29)</sup>. These frames also strengthen the women's alignment with the disciples whose fear is attributed to a lack of faith (4,41; cf. 4,40) and a failure to understand (9,32)<sup>(30)</sup>. Finally, the explanatory γάρ clause, "for they were afraid", aligns the women with other negatively portrayed recurrent characters, especially Jesus' disciples.

<sup>(29)</sup> G. O'COLLINS, "The Fearful Silence of Three Women (Mark, 16:8c)", *Greg* 69 (1988) 499-503 and R.H. LIGHTFOOT, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (New York 1950) 88-91, distinguish between the [negative] fear of human beings and the [positive] fear of God. Both commentators assert that the occurrence in 16,8 indicates a positive reaction to the divine and would limit this positive connotation to this one occurrence. The introduction of such a singular connotation in the last verse of the narrative, however, is untenable. Since φοβέομαι has a consistently negative connotation in its earlier occurrences, the frames evoked by its appearance here impose valuations highly resistant to a positive connotation (see n.15 above). Since the cessation of narration removes the possibility of modifying these frames, the negative valuation continues to hold sway.

<sup>(30)</sup> The disciples are the most frequent referents of the subject complements of this verb in the previous narration (4,41; 6,50; 9,32; and 10,31).

The women's alignment with the disciples is encouraged by each of the noted frames of v. 8; and their silence frustrates the implied reader's expectation for the disciples' rehabilitation and makes the women and the disciples the brunt of destructive irony. These factors combine to impose a very negative valuation on both the women and the disciples.

### III. The Characterization of the Women

The analysis of 15,40–16,8 indicates that the frames evoked by the narration contribute to the characterization of the women by generating relationships between the women and other characters, by establishing expectations concerning their actions, and by imposing valuations on the women and their actions. Each of these means of characterization receives brief comment.

The narration of 15,40-41 generates relationships aligning the women with Jesus and his disciples, especially in the positive aspects of the disciples' presentation (ἀκολουθέω, διακονέω). The women then receive a tenuous alignment (θεωρέω, τίθεμαι 15,47) with the positively valued character, Joseph of Arimathea. Their presentation in 16,1-4a initially strengthens the women's alignment with Joseph (μνημεῖον) even as it raises the potential for this relationship to be superseded (ἀποκυλίω). However, in 16,5 the women, through related frames, are aligned with the young man (συνακολουθέω, 14,50) whose original valuation was ambiguous (φεύγω, 14,51). Though the subsequent narration (16,5b-7) contrasts the young man with the negative aspects of the disciples' presentation, the women do not share in his rehabilitation but are confirmed in their alignment with the negatively valued disciples (φεύγω, ἔκστασις, φοβέομαι).

The generation of expectations contributes significantly to the characterization of both Jesus' disciples (τίθημι + ἐν μνημεῖω) and the women (σάββατον, ὑπάγω, εἶπον). The disciples' failure to place Jesus' body in the tomb, as the disciples of John the Baptist did for John (6,29), results in their negative valuation; and this valuation accrues to the women who later fail to perform the action expected of them at the tomb. The women's frustration of the expectation that they will go and tell the message leads to their negative valuation; and the expectation of conflict between Jesus and his opponents (σάββατον) is realized, with the women in the role of those opposing Jesus' will.

As indicated below, the valuations imposed on the women by the narration are overwhelmingly positive in 15,40-41.47, and 16,1, increasingly ambiguous in 16,2-5a, and, aided by the frustration of expectations generated in 16,5b-7, consistently negative in 16,8:

The Valuations Imposed on the Women by the Frames Evoked by the Narration (underlining indicates frames directly establishing relationships with Jesus' disciples)

	<i>positive</i>	<i>ambiguous</i>	<i>negative</i>
15,40	γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν	θεωροῦσαι	
15,41	women's names ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ <u>ἠκολούθουν</u> διηκόνουν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα		
15,47	women's names ἐθεώρουν		
16,1	women's names ἠγόρασαν	<u>ἀλείψωσιν</u>	
16,2	πρωτῷ μνημεῖον		
16,4	ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν		
16,5	μνημεῖον	ἀποκεκύλισται ὁ λίθος <u>ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα</u> νεανίσκον	
16,6			<u>ἐξεθαμβήθησαν</u> <u>Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε</u>
16,7			<u>ζητεῖτε</u> <u>[ὑπάγετε]</u> <u>[εἶπατε]</u> <u>ἔφυγον</u> <u>εἶχεν γὰρ ... ἔκστασις</u> <u>τρόμος</u> <u>ἔκστασις</u> <u>οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν</u> <u>ἐφοβοῦντο</u> <u>ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ</u>
16,8			

## IV. The Narrative Function of the Women

The characterization of the women plays a central rhetorical function in the overall narrative development in Mark. Their introduction as followers (ἠκολούθουν) of Jesus from the beginning in Galilee (15,41) recalls the long absent disciples (since 14,72) and aligns the women with the earlier positive characterization of the disciples. The women's increasingly negative valuation recalls the increasingly negative presentation of the disciples. The redundant evocation of frames associated with the disciples brings to the fore the implied reader's expectation for the rehabilitation of the disciples and established the women as the appropriate agents to facilitate this rehabilitation. The women's flight (16,8), however, introduces two contrasting elements into the beliefs of the authorial and narrative audiences: the failure of the women to pass on the young man's report and the final failure of the disciples and their estimation as outsiders<sup>(31)</sup>. The authorial audience, based on its pre-existent knowledge and beliefs, 'knows better' and must reject these beliefs of the narrative audience to ensure its pre-existent basis of faith. This rejection, however, effectively deconstructs the coherence of the story world, the basis for interpreting the Gospel as a whole and especially the ending at 16,8. This rejection simultaneously removes the possibility that the implied reader can maintain its self-estimation (4,11) as an insider based on its ability to understand and interpret the necessities of the story world. The implied reader's self-estimation as an outsider establishes a relationship of close alignment with the negatively valued disciples. Thus, the ending at 16,8 constitutes a 'trap' for the implied reader that is sprung in two stages: the implied reader first judges the disciples negatively and then, through its

<sup>(31)</sup> J. L. MAGNESS, *Sense and Absence: Structure and Suspension in the Ending of Mark's Gospel* (Atlanta 1986) 115, examines the literary conventions available to the Evangelist and concludes, "The presence of the discourse about the women ... overcomes the absence of their words and the absence of any narration about their report by speaking their words for them in the reader's minds": cf. N. PETERSEN, "When Is the End Not the End?: Literary Reflections on the Ending of Mark's Narrative", *Int* 34 (1980) 151-166. However, Magness does not consider that the narration has grounded an expectation that the command to the women will not be fulfilled. As noted earlier, commands employing the word, *say* (λέγω), previously were violated by those to whom they are addressed.

self-estimation as an outsider, recognizes its alignment with the negatively valued disciples<sup>(32)</sup>.

The ending at 16,8 denies the possibility that the disciples and Peter, the textually indicated proclaimers of the young man's message, will be able to fulfill their task. A review of the major characters of the story world reveals no other positively valued disciples who are appropriate bearers of the message<sup>(33)</sup>. Though some minor characters received positive valuation, their scanty development precludes their recognition as an appropriate candidate. There remains only one candidate whose identification as a disciple and whose failure in discipleship provides a powerful motivation for undertaking the proclamation of the message, the implied reader. Since the implied reader is not a narratively immanent character of the story world, it cannot fulfill the requirements for complete action. Thus, in the final analysis, the story indeed fails. Even in its failure, however, the story becomes a parable for the real reader; and, unlike the parables of the story world that frequently conceal, this parable reveals (4,22) the manner in which the story of the real reader similarly may fail or succeed.

<sup>(32)</sup> Similar traps for the reader appear in antecedent biblical narrative: Nathan's story of the rich man (M. STERNBERG, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative* [Bloomington 1985] 429-430 and the Book of Jonah (J. SMART, "The Book of Jonah: Introduction and Exegesis", *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VI [Nashville 1956] 872). R.K. HARRISON, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids 1969) 905, notes that, as in the case of Mark, many interpreters have viewed the Book of Jonah as an unfinished work.

<sup>(33)</sup> H. C. WAETJEN, *A Reordering of Power: A Socio-Political Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis 1989) 216-218, 242-243, argues for an identification of the young man as an ideal disciple of Jesus (243), especially in the context of 16,5-7. Though "followed along with" (συνηκολούθει, 14,51) relates the young man directly to Peter, James, and John (5,37) and indirectly to the disciples of Jesus through the associated word, "follow" (ἀκολουθεῖω), the most direct relationship with the disciples is established through "fled" (ἔφυγεν, 14,52; cf. 14,50) which evokes frames imposing a negative valuation on the young man. The remaining frames evoked by the narration of 14,51-52 and 16,5-7 align the young man most closely not with the disciples but with Jesus himself: "linen cloth" (14,51; cf. 15,46); "sitting at the right" (16,5; cf. 12,38; 14,62); "white" (16,5; cf. 9,3); "go" (16,7; cf. 1,44; 2,11; 5,19; 6,38; 7,29; 8,33; 10,21.52; 11,2; 14,13); "say" (16,7; cf. 11,3; 14,14); and the quote (16,7; cf. 14,28). In particular the "divine" robe and the position, "sitting at the right", emphasize a heavenly origin for the young man in 16,5-7.



The undelivered message, “He is going before you in(to) Galilee: there you will see him as he told to you” (16,7), indicates that the time for the disciples’ definitive call, designation, and mission has arrived. The disciples have not received the message; but the implied reader and so the real reader has received it. The implied reader is constrained from acting on the message, but the real reader is not. Thus the narrative invites the real reader to hear Jesus’ call to become a proclaimer of the gospel. As such the Gospel becomes gospel; for it is a call for deeper commitment, a message that demands a response of faith and commitment from its hearers.

### Conclusion

The evocation of frames in Mark 15,40–16,8 grounds a complex characterization of Mary Magdalene, Mary of James the lesser and the mother of Joses, and Salome by establishing relationships that either align or contrast the women with other characters, by generating expectations concerning their actions, and by imposing particular valuations on the women and their actions. This characterization is neither static nor linear. Rather, relationships once established either are strengthened (disciples) or overturned (Joseph, young man); expectations are frustrated (delivery of Jesus’ message to the disciples); and words and phrases initially imposing consistently positive valuation give way to other words and phrases imposing consistently negative valuation. The characterization of the women ultimately establishes their strongest relationship of alignment with the disciples of Jesus precisely at the moment of their greatest failure and negative valuation. The women’s flight, like that of the disciples before them, receives harshly negative valuation, thereby frustrating the implied reader’s last great expectation: the rehabilitation of Jesus’ disciples. The failure of the disciples to go to Galilee to receive their definitive call by the resurrected Jesus removes the possibility of narrative closure for the Gospel story. The resulting crisis of interpretation invites the implied reader, and, indeed, the real reader, to take up the actions required for closure: becoming that disciple of Jesus who will proclaim the Gospel message.

Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies  
Villanova University  
800 Lancaster Ave.  
Villanova, PA 19085-1699 USA

Paul DANOVE

## **Paul's Appeal and the Obedience to Christ: The Line of Thought in 2 Corinthians 10,1-6**

The second part of the main title "the obedience to Christ" is taken from 2 Cor 10,5b: "and we take every thought captive to obey Christ (εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ)". The question is whether and how that obedience to Christ can be linked with the appeal present in 10,1a: "I myself, Paul, appeal to you (παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς) by the meekness and gentleness of Christ". Most interpreters assume that the sentence of v.1a is not complete. The relative clause of v.1b interrupts what Paul originally intended to say. With "I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!" Paul reflects on what some report on him. One expects, however, that his appeal will receive a concretization and, therefore, it is often said that 10,2, with the verb δέομαι, takes up the idea of παρακαλῶ: "I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards". According to this view, v.2 provides the content of Paul's appeal<sup>(1)</sup>. Yet in v.1a the expression "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" suggests that Christ is in one way or another an example for Paul's attitude and, equally, that the apostle is going to request from the Corinthians a moral conduct similar to Christ's example. But vv.2-6 do not point to such items of ethical behavior. They are not exhortation in the strict sense of the term.

Another problem, which could be referred to as epistolary, must also be mentioned. Those who take 2 Corinthians as an integral letter could be tempted to see in 10,1 the beginning of the hortatory section of that letter. Yet the content of chs. 10-13 is hardly straight moral exhortation. Others who consider the chapters as (part of) a separate letter must explain Paul's appeal at the beginning of these chapters.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf., e.g., E.-B. ALLO, *Seconde épître aux Corinthiens* (EB; Paris 1956) 241: "On attend comme régime un mot qui ne vient pas, car la phrase est interrompue par une parenthèse, et l'idée de παρακαλῶ est reprise par un autre verbe, δέομαι".

The precise question which the present study considers is twofold. Is it possible to plausibly reconstruct what Paul intended to add as a further qualification of the verb *παρακαλῶ* at the moment that he wrote 10,1a? Does the answer to this first question, together with a better insight into Paul's reasoning in 10,1-6, confirm or weaken the position of the integrity of 2 Corinthians? The procedure of this study will be as follows. First, in a close reading, Paul's train of thought in 10,1-6 will be investigated. Then three special items regarding Paul's parenthesis must be elucidated. The final step will examine the formula "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" in connection with Paul's appeal to the Corinthians and their obedience to Christ.

### I. The Line of Thought

Within chapter 10 and, more in particular, 10,1-11, the verses 1-6 form a small tightly knit unit. Yet a first reading already indicates that the line of thought is complex.

#### *Verse 1*

A. Plummer comments on v.1: "The appeal reads somewhat strangely as a prelude to one of the most bitter and vehement paragraphs in the writings of St Paul" <sup>(2)</sup>. The relative pronoun *ὃς* in v. 1b certainly has Paul as its antecedent. Christ's "virtues", i.e., his meekness and gentleness mentioned in v. 1a, bring Paul to think of his own attitude or, better, to what some people in Corinth report of him. So in v. 1b Paul qualifies himself; yet the whole of the relative clause refers to a reproach, the content of which will become clearer in v. 2 and especially in v. 10. The *REB* translates v. 1b: "I who am so timid (you say) when face to face with you, so courageous when I am away from you". The addition "you say (i.e., you Corinthians)" is probably not a completely correct interpretation; "you intruders as well as you Corinthian critics" might be preferred. The qualification of Paul in v. 1b, a parenthesis, should not necessarily have constituted an *anacolouthon* nor an absolute interruption. The main reasoning could easily have been resumed in

<sup>(2)</sup> A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh 1915; repr. 1970) 273.

v. 2. Whether this is the case should become apparent in the ensuing discussion.

### Verse 2

The (over)literal translation of v. 2a runs as follows: “But I ask not when present to be bold with the confidence”. One has mentally to insert a ὑμᾶς after “I ask, I beg” and add the εἰς ὑμᾶς from the end of v. 1: “I beg (you) not to force me to be bold (with you) when present”. It is not at all certain that the verb δέομαι is an equivalent of παρακαλῶ and takes up the train of thought of v. 1a. V. 2 appears to react to v. 1b, not to continue v. 1a. The implicit reproach is countered: Paul says that he could easily show boldness toward the Corinthians and that he is planning to do so toward his opponents. V. 2 even contains a barely hidden threat. If necessary, he will use his daring confidence. We find here also an indirect reference to a future visit (cf. 12,20 and 13,1). The particle δέ at the beginning of the sentence points to an opposition between the accusation and the reaction of Paul. The vocabulary in v. 2 (παρών and θαρρῆσαι) recalls that of v. 1b (ἄπών and θαρρῶ). In v. 2 we may further point to the synonym of θαρρῆσαι, namely τολμῆσαι<sup>(3)</sup>, and to the double use of λογίζομαι: Paul thinks (= counts, plans) and some think (= are of the opinion, accuse). The “some who think” are most probably mainly Paul’s opponents, but also the Corinthian critics.

One could detect at the beginning of v. 2 a kind of moral appeal to the Corinthians: “I beg (you to behave in such a way) that I am not forced to be bold (with you)”<sup>(4)</sup>. At any rate, in v. 2 Paul no longer has in mind the specific (or more general) exhortation which was announced in v. 1a. This constitutes a major shift in the line of

<sup>(3)</sup> Yet according to PLUMMER, *Corinthians*, 274, the two verbs are presumably not synonyms: “The change of word is probably neither accidental nor merely for the sake of variety, but marks the difference between the feigned courage [θαρρῶ] which his critics attributed to him and the uncompromising boldness [τολμῆσαι] which he is confident of exhibiting if his opponents render it necessary”.

<sup>(4)</sup> C. K. BARRETT, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC; London <sup>2</sup>1979) 249, does not admit this reconstruction: Paul “does not say (though it would have been easy to do so), I ask *you* to repent, that I may not have to show this bold front against *you*”. It is not clear to me why not.

thought. It is also worthwhile to note that Paul has begun this section with the first person singular, very much emphasized (αὐτὸς... ἐγὼ Παῦλος, v. 1a); in v. 2 that singular is still present, but toward the end of the verse a first person plural appears — one might say almost unnoticed: ἡμᾶς... περιπατοῦντας. This plural will continue through verse 7.

The last expression of v. 2 was: “as if we are walking κατὰ σάρκα”. Paul's opponents and critics falsely (cf. ὥς) assume that his way of acting is dictated by worldly or human standards. As far as we can judge, the expression here is not referring to a sinful egocentric conduct but to Paul's lack of power, to his humble and timid condition when he was face to face with the Corinthians (cf. v. 1)<sup>(5)</sup>. That this interpretation is correct becomes evident from v. 3.

### Verse 3

V. 3 is introduced by γάρ and explicates the phrase “walking according to the flesh”. As often occurs in a γάρ-sentence, the first clause is concessive: “to be sure”, or “true”, or “indeed, we are in the flesh”, i.e., we are limited, fragile human beings. Due consideration must be given to the change of preposition: ἐν σάρκι. The second clause, then, categorically negates a κατὰ σάρκα way of acting: “we do not wage war according to human (or worldly) standards”<sup>(6)</sup>. The verb περιπατέω is replaced by στρατεύομαι and thus the military imagery is introduced, “by far the most elaborate instance” of this use in the Pauline letters<sup>(7)</sup>. It looks as if Paul is somewhat captivated by it.

### Verse 4a

This verse contains a second γάρ-sentence and forms a real parenthesis within this context. Paul wants to clarify what he means

<sup>(5)</sup> Cf., e.g., ALLO, *Corinthiens*, 243-244. C. WOLFF, *Der zweite Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (ThHK; Berlin 1989) 197, defends the ethical sense.

<sup>(6)</sup> Cf. V. FURNISH, *2 Corinthians* (AB; Garden City, NY 1984) 257, who rightly states: “In both formulations *sarx* (“flesh”) stands for what is finite, worldly, limited, and limiting”.

<sup>(7)</sup> FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, 457. Cf. WOLFF, *Korinther*, 195: “In den Kampfaussagen nimmt Paulus die Vorstellung von der geistlichen Waffeneinrichtung auf, die er wiederholt verwendet, 6,7; 1. Thess. 5,8; Röm. 6,13; 13,12; vgl. auch Phil. 2,25 und Philem. 2”.

by a battle that is not “according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα)”. Attention is given solely to the (metaphorical) weapons Paul is using: they are not σαρκικά. The vocabulary is basically the same as in v.3: compare σαρκικός with σάρξ and στρατεία with στρατεύομαι.

The negative οὐ σαρκικά is now positively filled: Paul’s weapons are “powerful to God”; i.e., God can use them; or: they have divine power; they are “mightily effective”<sup>(8)</sup>. They have the power to destroy strongholds.

#### *Verses 4b-6a*

After the parenthesis concerning the weapons, Paul returns to the battle itself. As is well known, strictly speaking, the three participles (nominative, plural) of vv.4b-6a could still depend on the personal verb “we wage war” of v.3b. However, because of the parenthesis of v.4a one easily loses sight of this verb. So the participles are perhaps better taken as nominatives absolute, no longer having any grammatical connection with v.3. The first verb (καθαίρουντες) takes up the idea present in the expression πρὸς καθαίρεσιν in the same verse 4, and thus it becomes clear that vv.4b-6a will depict in ample detail what “weapons, powerful for God and able to destroy strongholds” can do.

Metaphorical and realistic expressions are intermingled. Compare ὕψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον and αἰχμαλωτίζοντες on the one hand with λογισμούς, γινῶσιν τοῦ θεοῦ, πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ and the whole of v.6a on the other hand. The readers may have the impression that by this rather strange war imagery Paul presents a general depiction of his forceful apostolate: past, present and future, applied to friend and enemy alike. Yet the images betray Paul’s awareness of opposition against him. A nuance of threat in his speech cannot go unnoticed. The phrase “being ready” of v.6a, moreover, contains another allusion to a future visit to Corinth by Paul. We are reminded of v.2b: Paul’s decision to be bold with those who slander him is now referred to as his readiness to punish every disobedience.

<sup>(8)</sup> FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, 454.

*Verse 6b*

This last verse surprises the reader for two reasons. (1) While in v. 5 Paul sees the obedience to Christ of all as the final aim of his apostolic endeavor (every mind has to obey Christ), in v. 6b the obedience of the addressees alone is emphasized: ὑμῶν ὑπακοή. One must ask, therefore, whether the concept of "obedience" of v. 6b is still exactly the same as that which is present in the expression of v. 5<sup>(9)</sup>. (2) A careful consideration of the tense in the construction of v. 6b (ὅταν πληρωθῇ) recognizes its anteriority *vis-à-vis* the action spoken of in v. 6a. Paul will eventually punish every disobedience "after that" the obedience of the Corinthians "will have been completed", i.e., "once your obedience will be complete"<sup>(10)</sup>. One has the impression that just as in v. 2a Paul was implicitly requesting from the Corinthians an adequate behavior towards himself, so also in v. 6b the obedience asked for contains a reference not only to Christ (cf. v. 5), but also to his own person<sup>(11)</sup>. This again implies a change of direction in Paul's argumentation.

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The preceding brief analysis can be summarized as follows. In 10,1-6 there is a substantial shift with regard to more than one aspect. Paul appears to announce a moral exhortation. He mentions Christ who is the basis of his authority and whose qualities of meekness and gentleness are exemplary for Christians (and Paul himself) — at least that is our impression. But from v. 1b onwards he speaks of an accusation brought forward against him and he defends himself; he denies what the opponents say.

Inimical intruders and critics of his person have entered the scene; this is manifest in v. 2b. At the beginning of the pericope one

<sup>(9)</sup> WOLFF, *Korinther*, 199, does not see any difference between the two uses.

<sup>(10)</sup> Cf. BARRETT, *Corinthians*, 253-254: "When he has achieved this goal [the obedience of the Corinthians], his next step will be to punish the intruders ..."; and the excellent comment by FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, 464.

<sup>(11)</sup> For "obedience to Paul", see with ὑπακοή Philemon 21 and 2 Cor 7,15 (to Titus; and Paul?), with ὑπήκοος 2 Cor 2,9 (cf. the use of παρακαλῶ in v. 8), with ὑπακούω Phil 2,12 ("as you have always obeyed" [most probably: "to me"]); here also the alternation of presence and absence).

expects that the Corinthians would be exhorted to a better Christian life. But, certainly from v. 2b onwards, Paul seems to be very much occupied with himself and his enemies; he indicates how he himself acts and will act as an apostle. Paul is able to show that he does not lack boldness; he will oppose his enemies and demolish their arguments and pretension; his weapons will prove powerful for God. Only at the very end, in v. 6b, do the addressees come back to the forefront; their obedience must reach completion before Paul can effectively deal with the opposition. Yet one wonders whether that obedience of the Corinthians in v. 6b is still the same obedience to Christ mentioned in v. 5.

## II. Three Special Items

Three factors remain to be dealt with. What exactly does the use of παρακαλῶ suggest? What does Paul mean by "his authority to build up" the Corinthians (cf. v. 8)? And can a consideration of Paul's exhortation at the end of the letter help us to better understand the appeal at the beginning of chapter 10?

### 1. "Parakalō" in Paul

Paul employs the verb παρακαλῶ frequently. As is well known the range of meanings of this verb is wide: from exhorting and appealing to comforting and consoling<sup>(12)</sup>. Besides 2 Cor 10,1, Paul employs παρακαλῶ four more times with the preposition διὰ followed by a genitive: Rom 12,1 and 15,30; 1 Cor 1,10 and 2 Cor 5,20<sup>(13)</sup>.

<sup>(12)</sup> Cf. D. LÜHRMANN, "Freundschaftsbrief trotz Spannungen. Zu Gattung und Aufbau des Ersten Korintherbriefs", W. SCHRAGE (ed.), *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments. FS H. Greeven* (BZNW 47; Berlin-New York 1986) 298-314. For the study of παρακαλῶ, see C.J. BJERKELUND, *Parakalō; Form, Funktion und Sinn der parakalō-Sätze in den paulinischen Briefen* (Bibl. Theol. Norv. 1; Oslo 1967); T.Y. MULLINS, "Petition as a Literary Form", *NT* 5 (1962) 46-54; H. SCHLIER, "Die Eigenart der christlichen Mahnung nach dem Apostel Paulus", id., *Besinnung auf das Neue Testament* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1964) 340-357; J. THOMAS, παρακαλέω, παράκλησις, *EDNT* III, 23-27.

<sup>(13)</sup> Philemon 9 has a διὰ + acc. construction: διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην... παρακαλῶ. The Pauline uses of παρακαλῶ in the sense of "appealing" can be divided with regard to grammar as follows: a) with infinitive con-



In 2 Cor 5,20 God is the grammatical subject of the genitive absolute and the apostles are the agents through whom God acts: ὡς θεοῦ παρακαλοῦντος δι' ἡμῶν ("seeing that God is making his appeal through us")<sup>(14)</sup>. 5,20, however, is not a real parallel to the other texts precisely because God and not Paul is the subject and, moreover, because the instrumental use of διὰ with a human person as genitive ("through us") is not present in the other passages. Yet the clause is interesting with regard to 2 Cor 10,1 since in 5,20, too, the verb παρακαλοῦντος is resumed by δεόμεθα: "we beseech you". The content of the appeal of God in 5,20 is concretized by that of Paul's beseeching: "reconcile yourselves to God"<sup>(15)</sup>. We have already expressed doubt that 10,2 with its non-resumptive δέομαι can be considered as a concretization of the content of παρακαλῶ in 10,1. This, of course, weakens even more the similarity between 5,20 and 10,1-2<sup>(16)</sup>.

In 1 Cor 1,10 the text reads: παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες... ("I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you speak with one voice..."). Paul is the

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struction: Rom 16,17; 2 Cor 2,8; 6,1; Phil 4,2; 1 Thess 4,10 (and 3,2: infinitive preceded by τό); b) with ἵνα-clause: 1 Cor 16,12; 16,15-16 (probably); 2 Cor 8,6; 9,5; 12,8; 1 Thess 4,1 (and 2,12: with εἰς τό + infinitive construction); c) followed by an imperative: 1 Cor 4,16; 1 Thess 5,14; d) absolute, but the context provides the content of the appeal: 2 Cor 12,18; 1 Thess 2,12; Philemon 9 and 10. What about 2 Cor 10,1a?

Cf. the thorough discussion in LÜHRMANN, "Freundschaftsbrief", 300-304.

<sup>(14)</sup> Cf. PLUMMER, *Corinthians*, 185: "The ὡς always gives a subjective view of what is stated by the genitive absolute, but that subjective view may be shown by the context to be either right or wrong". In 2 Cor 5,20, it must be understood as 'right'. Does the *REB* version, e.g., perhaps prefer a 'wrong' understanding: "It is as if God were appealing to you..."?

<sup>(15)</sup> For this active translation see my "'Renconcile yourselves...': A Reading of 2 Corinthians 5,11-21", in R. BIERINGER – J. LAMBRECHT, *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (BETL 112; Leuven 1994) 363-412, esp. 390-391.

<sup>(16)</sup> PLUMMER, *Corinthians*, 274, claims that in 10,1-2 there is a difference of meaning between παρακαλῶ and δεόμεναι: "The appeal to the meekness and gentleness of Christ influences the Apostle himself, and he drops from magisterial exhortation to earnest entreaty". He detects in παρακαλῶ "almost a minatory tone"; it "is here 'exhort' rather than 'entreat'" (273). These kinds of remarks are not made by the author with regard to 5,20 (see pp. 185-186). It would seem that in 5,20 the two verbs are used almost as synonyms. Cf. also BJERKELUND, *Parakalô*, 154-155.

subject, the Christians (in Corinth) are the addressees and the vocative “brothers” is employed. The content of the appeal is expressed by means of a *ἵνα*-clause; in classical Greek an infinitive construction would be utilized. “By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” points to the authority with which Paul wants to enforce his appeal. This last item is not present in the same way in the other instances, although the appropriation of God’s authority is not, it would seem, completely absent.

In Rom 12,1 Paul clearly begins a new section of his long letter. This reminds us of 2 Cor 10,1 where we have a similar situation if 2 Corinthians is assumed to be one letter. The text runs as follows: Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ... (“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God...”). Again, Paul is the subject, the Christians (in Rome) are the addressees, and the vocative “brothers” is used. The content of the appeal is now expressed by means of a classical infinitive construction<sup>(17)</sup>. The *διά*-phrase most probably does not go with the infinitive, but with *παρακαλῶ*<sup>(18)</sup>. “By God’s mercies” indicates the reason why Paul can appeal to the Romans to offer their bodies. The plural “mercies” and the particle “therefore” refer back to the preceding chapters wherein Paul dealt with God’s acts of merciful goodness manifested to Jews and Greeks alike<sup>(19)</sup>. This reference enhances Paul’s authority, as well as making the appeal more compelling. The question, however, must also be asked: is a merciful God at the same time not an example for the Christian way of life which Paul is going to recommend in Rom 12–15?

The text of Rom 15,30 is: παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ πνεύματος συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς... (“I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers...”). Once again, we have Paul, the Christians (in Rome), the vocative “brothers”<sup>(20)</sup>, and an infinitive construction. The phrase “by our Lord Jesus Christ” can

<sup>(17)</sup> Cf. BLASS–DEBRUNNER–FUNK, no. 408.

<sup>(18)</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *Romans* (AB; New York 1993) 639.

<sup>(19)</sup> FITZMYER, *Romans*, *ibid.*

<sup>(20)</sup> P<sup>46</sup> and B omit ἀδελφοί.

be compared with that of 1 Cor 1,10 "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ". In both passages the authoritative appeal is strengthened through a reference to "our Lord Jesus Christ". The addition "(and) by the love of the Spirit" resembles "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" of 2 Cor 10,1 and "by the mercies of God" of Rom 12,1. To be sure, there is already ground and motivation present in the phrases "by Christ" or "by the name of Christ"; Paul can appeal because of Christ. But the motivation of the other expressions possesses a moral and exemplary nuance as well: because Christ is meek and gentle, because the Spirit loves us, because God is merciful, because of all this the Christians must act and behave as Paul is going to ask.

We may bring together the results of this brief overview. In three passages — 1 Cor 1,10, Rom 12,1 and 15,30 — seven items are similar: (1) a connective particle (*δέ* or *οὖν*), (2) the subject of appealing (Paul), (3) the addressees (Christians), (4) the vocative address ("brothers"), (5) the *διὰ* + gen. phrase which through its reference to God or Christ grounds the appeal, (6) an infinitive construction (or the *koinè* substitute with *ἵνα*) and (7) the "moral" content of the appeal. Regarding that content, in 1 Cor 1,10 Paul exhorts the Christians to be united; in Rom 12,1-2 he urges them to conduct a Christian ethical life; and in 15,30-32 he makes the more specific appeal to strive together with him in prayer for the good outcome of his plans for the future. As far as 2 Cor 10,1 is concerned, not so much the absence of "brothers" or the presence of the emphasis *αὐτὸς*... *ἐγὼ Παῦλος*, but the brusque interruption at the end of v. 1a is striking: no infinitive construction, no indication of the content of the appeal<sup>(21)</sup>. And this notwithstanding the fact that the *διὰ* + genitive phrase of 10,1 is very much like that of Rom 12,1 and 15,30 (second half) where it contains both a grounding and exemplary function.

It would seem, therefore, that at the beginning of 2 Cor 10,1 Paul intends to do what he does elsewhere, namely to formulate an exhortation to moral Christian life. But while writing "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" his attention seems to be

(<sup>21</sup>) Cf. LÜHRMANN, "Freundschaftsbrief", 302-303: "*παρακαλῶ*-*Σätze* enthalten nun mit Ausnahme allein von 2 Kor 10,1 immer eine Aufforderung zu einem bestimmten Verhalten..., münden also in *Paränese* in einem sehr allgemeinen Sinn" (302).

diverted; he remembers the slanders against his person which his opponents and critics are spreading. The “humble” Paul of v. 1b, as well as the Paul “walking according to the flesh” of v. 2b, was their misrepresentation of him. He must have realized that their way of portraying him was, against their own intention but as matter of fact, a caricature of Christ being meek and gentle.

What Paul asks of his Christians in Corinth in v. 2 is certainly a change of attitude and behavior. They should conduct themselves in such a way that he is not forced to show against them the same boldness which he counts on showing against the intruders. But is this the content of the appeal which he had in mind when he wrote v. 1a? Hardly! One cannot but assume that what is actually requested from the Corinthians in v. 2 has a narrower scope; it becomes focused on the struggle between Paul and the opponents, and, of course, also on the sides which some Corinthians are taking. It is no longer the exhortation he originally intended to give when he composed v. 1a.

In 13,11 Paul employs the verb in the passive: παρακαλεῖσθε, which must be translated by a paraphrase such as “heed my appeal, listen to my appeal, take my appeal to heart”. The verb itself does not indicate the content of that appeal, but the other imperatives in the immediate context provide very clearly what is requested from the Corinthians: “mend your ways, (heed my appeal) agree with one another, live in peace”<sup>(22)</sup>. Is this perhaps the kind of moral exhortation which we were entitled to expect at 10,1?<sup>(23)</sup>

## 2. Paul's “*exousia*” to Build Up

The second item to be considered is found in 10,8. There we read: “Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it”. We encounter in this verse the

<sup>(22)</sup> In 13,11 Paul continues: “and the God of love and peace will be with you”. “Live in peace” and “the God of... peace” no doubt point back to 12,20: “quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder”. It is peace with one another (cf. Rom 12,18: μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες) that Paul has in mind. In Rom 5,1 peace with God is mentioned (cf. 2 Cor 5,20: “reconcile yourselves with God”; see also Rom 5,10). The broader context of 2 Corinthians allows us to suppose also an appeal to peace with Paul.

<sup>(23)</sup> For a description of what parenthesis aims at, see F. HAHN, “Die christologische Begründung urchristlicher Paränese”, *ZNW* 72 (1981) 88-99.

first of many occurrences of the verb "to boast" within chs. 10–13. The whole of v. 8 looks to the future (cf. the ἔάν + subj. construction). V. 8a, specifically, refers to what Paul is going to do in these chapters. A. Plummer notes: Paul "begins with an 'if', but he ends with a confident assertion (= οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, v. 8c)" <sup>(24)</sup>. Περισσότερόν τι can mean either "somewhat abundantly" or "more abundantly". If there is a real comparison ("more than"), the question should be asked whether the phrase refers to vv. 3–6, where Paul is already somewhat boasting, or to v. 7, as C. K. Barrett comments: "a further boast, that is, beyond that of being... 'Christ's'" <sup>(25)</sup>. The first interpretation may perhaps be preferred.

With ἐξουσία Paul refers to his "authority to preach the gospel and to command and discipline the members of the congregation" <sup>(26)</sup>. The ἐξουσία is "die apostolische Vollmacht" <sup>(27)</sup>. Paul seemingly refers to his apostolic vocation (see Gal 1, 15–16). The metaphor οἰκοδομή here points to the process of building (not to the result, the building as product). As to καθαίρεσις we cannot but remember its use already in v. 4. But Paul appears to allude to the prophet Jeremiah, and perhaps more specifically to 1, 10: "See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant". If so, we should note Paul's rewriting: not to destroy, only to build up <sup>(28)</sup>. Moreover, we should also take into account that with "and not for tearing you down" Paul may be alluding to the destructive work of his opponents <sup>(29)</sup>. Have we to take αἰσχυνθήσομαι as a theological passive and to understand "by God" (cf. v. 18: ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν)? A positive answer to this question is not certain. The change from the first person plural to singular within v. 8 should be noted (the opposite occurred in v. 1).

<sup>(24)</sup> PLUMMER, *Corinthians*, 280.

<sup>(25)</sup> BARRETT, *Corinthians*, 258.

<sup>(26)</sup> FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, 477.

<sup>(27)</sup> R. BULTMANN, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther* (ed. E. DINKLER) (KEK; Göttingen <sup>2</sup>1987) 191.

<sup>(28)</sup> See J. DUPONT, *Gnosis. La connaissance religieuse dans les épîtres de Saint Paul* (Brugge–Paris 1949) 241. Dupont perhaps pays too much attention to Jer 1, 10 alone. There are other passages in Jeremiah with a closer resemblance of vocabulary. See WOLFF, *Korinther*, 201–202.

<sup>(29)</sup> WOLFF, *Korinther*, 201: "Damit teilt er einen Seitenhieb an seine Widersacher aus".

The building up (οἰκοδομή) of the Corinthians is no doubt more than their renewed obedience to Paul and their simultaneous rejection of the opponents. The whole Christian life must be expanded and come to an adult, morally responsible stature. Paul means a complete obedience to Christ (cf. 10,5); he has in mind the perfection of his Christians (cf. 10,6b; but what is here “complete obedience”?), their improvement (“what we pray for is your improvement, τὴν ὑμῶν κατάρτισιν, 13,9; cf. καταρτίζεσθε in 13,11). His ἐξουσία to reach this goal will manifest itself in his confidence and boldness (10,2), in the use of weapons which have divine power to destroy strongholds (10,4), in his future presence in Corinth “with actions” (τῷ ἔργῳ; 10,11) and, if needed, with severity (cf. ἀποτόμως, 13,10). God is speaking in Paul (cf. 13,3). In fact, this apostolic authority is qualified by God’s power, i.e., by the resurrection power to which he explicitly refers in 13,3-4<sup>(30)</sup>.

### 3. The “*paraklēsis*” Given in 2 Cor 12,19–13,11

At the end of the letter Paul is, in one way or another, exhorting the Corinthian Christians. In 12,19 he emphasizes that all his fighting and pleading in the letter has been done “for the upbuilding” of his beloved Corinthians. Alas, the moral situation in the church of Corinth is not as Paul wishes it to be. He fears that he “may have to mourn over many of those who sinned before and have not repented of the impurity, immorality, and licentiousness which they have practiced” (12,21). The Corinthians must examine and test themselves (cf. 13,5). Just as in 10,8, so also in 13,10 Paul speaks of “the authority which the Lord has given (him) for building up and not for tearing down”. The final exhortative verse is 13,11 and reads as follows: “aim for perfection, listen to my appeal (παρακαλεῖσθε), be of one mind, live in peace”.

To be sure, in this final passage there is still an amount of self-defence on the part of Paul and there are allusions to what the opponents are doing. One should also bear in mind that Paul is, above all, trying to win over his Corinthians, to have them reconciled with him. Yet the παράκλησις in the section is wider, more comprehensive. It is the quality of Christian life in its entirety which

<sup>(30)</sup> Cf. my study “Philological and Exegetical Notes on 2 Corinthians 13,4”, in BIERINGER–LAMBRECHT, *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, 589-598.

is put before the Corinthians: the fight against sin, the presence of God's effective love, the agreement with one another and peace in the Christian community. Once more we are brought to the same hypothesis. We ask ourselves: was all that also not the initial, yet unspoken content of Paul's παρακαλῶ in 10,1, and does all that not belong to what he coins in 10,5 by means of the expression "obedience to Christ"?<sup>(31)</sup> When we realize how carefully Paul, by means of many correlations, composes 12,19–13,11 as an inclusion with 10,1–11<sup>(32)</sup>, there should be no surprise that the content of both occurrences of παρακαλῶ (10,1 and 13,11) can be assumed to be identical.

### III. The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ

R. Leivestad's remark on 10,1 is to the point: "An appeal to the 'meekness and gentleness of Christ' is hardly in keeping with the harsh and forthright tone of the following argument, in which the apostle asserts his right and his determination to show no lenience"<sup>(33)</sup>. Moreover, the meaning and function of the expression "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" in 10,1 are not immediately evident. Does the expression refer to "virtues" of the earthly Jesus? What is the precise meaning here of the preposition διὰ followed by the genitive?<sup>(34)</sup> Is Christ presented as an example and, if so, is he imitated by Paul who appeals and begs? Or is he rather to be imitated by the Corinthians who should respond to Paul's request? It would seem that above all the last two questions are important regarding

<sup>(31)</sup> I think that there is more in 10,1–2 — implicitly in v.1a — than PLUMMER, *Corinthians*, detects: "Three elements which are conspicuous in the four chapters find expression in these two introductory verses; the strong personal feeling, indignation at the calumnies of his opponents, and the intimation that, if the opposition continues, he will not spare" (272).

<sup>(32)</sup> Cf. my study "Dangerous Boasting: Paul's Self-Commendation in 2 Corinthians 10–13", in R. BIERINGER (ed.), *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; Leuven 1996) 325–346, esp. note 10 on pp. 330–331.

<sup>(33)</sup> R. LEIVESTAD, "'The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ' II Cor X.1", *NTS* 12 (1965–66) 156–164, 156. Cf. the quotation from Plummer on p.399 of this article. See also BJERKELUND, *Parakalō*, 148, for his comment on 10,1a with regard to Paul's use of παρακαλῶ.

<sup>(34)</sup> Cf., e.g., LEIVESTAD's interpretation of διὰ in "The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ", 156: In 10,1 "διὰ is most likely used in the same way as πρὸς (cf. Latin 'per') to introduce an invocation or an adjuration". This grammatical explanation is hardly correct.

the topic of this study, i.e., the probable content that Paul originally had in mind when he wrote παρακαλῶ in v. 1a<sup>(35)</sup>.

### 1. *Paul Humble and Bold*

E. Güttgemanns<sup>(36)</sup> points to the fact that v. 1b is connected in a rather strange way to the preceding clause. The relative pronoun ὃς has Paul as its antecedent. However, three factors taken together give the impression that v. 1b is almost the beginning of a Christological hymn: (1) Χριστός, not Jesus, standing immediately before ὃς, (2) the so-called qualifications πραῦτης and ἐπιείκεια, and (3) the ὃς-introduction itself. These observations must confirm Güttgemanns' thesis that, here as elsewhere, Paul underlines the main characteristic of the apostolic existence. The apostle is the epiphany of Christ: "Der durch 'Leiden' qualifizierte 'Leib' des Apostels ist der 'Ort', wo die Macht des Kyrios epiphan wird"<sup>(37)</sup>. All this, however, remains highly speculative<sup>(38)</sup>.

H. D. Betz, from another point of view, asks whether v. 1b is simply an anticipation of the accusation explicitly quoted in v. 10. Through his investigation Betz comes to the conclusion — rightly, it would seem — that in v. 1b Paul is already answering the accusation and defending himself. Paul acknowledges the data which gave rise to that accusation, but he cannot accept the accusatory interpretation of that data. That Paul, however, defends his apostolic ministry in this way is obviously connected with the example of Christ, as well as his reflection upon it, his Christology<sup>(39)</sup>.

<sup>(35)</sup> Cf. our analysis of similar παρακαλῶ-expressions in Paul on pp. 404-408.

<sup>(36)</sup> E. GÜTTGEMANNS, *Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr. Studien zur paulinischen Christologie* (FRLANT 90; Göttingen 1966) 135-141.

<sup>(37)</sup> GÜTTGEMANNS, *Der leidende Apostel*, 140. Cf. the basically positive evaluation by BARRETT, *Corinthians*, 247-248.

<sup>(38)</sup> See my critical remarks in "The *nekrōsis* of Jesus: Ministry and Suffering in 2 Corinthians 4,7-15", BIERINGER-LAMBRECHT, *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, 309-333, esp. 317-321.

<sup>(39)</sup> Cf. H. D. BETZ, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition. Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu einer "Apologie". 2 Korinther 10-13* (BHT 45; Tübingen 1972) 51-52. In addition to his Christological explanation, Betz points to a number of factors in the Hellenistic world which probably also influenced Paul's expression here. Paul defends himself in more or less the same way as, e.g., a (poor, humble) Cynic-Stoic philosopher would answer the accusation of a (rich and eloquent) Sophist.



## 2. *Jesus Meek and Gentle*

Among others Leivestad very much stresses that in 10,1 Paul wants his readers to recognize a correspondence between Christ and himself, but Christ should not be taken here as the earthly Jesus. "Paul is not referring to the lenience and indulgence of the heavenly judge (= Christ), nor even to his mild and gracious attitude during his earthly life; he is alluding to the fact of the kenosis, the literal weakness and lowliness of the Lord" (40). For this view, one could refer to 8,9 in the same letter and, evidently, also to Phil 2,6-7. V. Furnish, following Leivestad, similarly rejects the suggestion that in v. 1a Paul "is revealing his knowledge of the 'character' of the earthly Jesus... It is much more likely that Paul is thinking of the pre-existent Lord who, in the gracious condescension of his incarnate life, became lowly, weak, and poor" (41).

Yet certain criticisms must be leveled here against such an interpretation. That Christ is not seen here as king or judge seems to be correct (42). But are we to exclude all reference to Jesus' behavior during his earthly life? To be sure, in the first half of the Christological hymn of Phil 2,6-11 the stress is on the incarnation itself as a "kenosis". Further, in 2 Cor 8,9 the same kenotic idea is formulated: ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν. The use of "Christ", not "Jesus", in 2 Cor 10,1 (in Phil 2,5, Christ Jesus; in 2,11: Jesus Christ) is also rightly mentioned. Moreover, the fact that in his letters Paul does not provide us with many data about the earthly life of Jesus may point away from a possible reference to Jesus' attitude on earth.

(40) LEIVESTAD, "The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ", 163. We may also add the following passage: "The ταπεινότης of the apostle is the consequence, an imitation and a continuation of the kenosis of Christ, of the paradoxical demonstration of divine δύναμις working through human ἀσθένεια" (164).

(41) FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, 460.

(42) Leivestad rightly disagrees with Harnack who stated "that the LXX knows of no other meaning of the term than 'die Huld des Herrschers'" (quotation in "The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ", 158). In his *Analysis philologica Novi Testamenti graeci* (Rome 31966) 407, M. Zerwick explains ἐπι-εἴκεια by "moderatio, aequitas (opp. severitati...), virtus quae seposito rigore iustitiae id quod aequum est (ὃ ἔ-οικεν = τὸ εἰκός) prosequitur". We may also refer to C. SPICQ, "Bénignité, mansuétude, clémence", *RB* 54 (1947) 321-339, 333 and his *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire*, I (OBO 22/1; Fribourg-Göttingen 1978) 263-267.

Yet, on the other hand, in reading the formula of 2 Cor 10,1 one spontaneously thinks of Mt 11,29: ὅτι πραῦς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ (cf. Zech 9,9: “Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”). Although it certainly is not advisable to assume that Paul is referring here to this saying of the Matthean Jesus, is he, therefore, in no way pointing to Jesus’ earthly life? Barrett’s remark concerning the “kenotic” theory is worth noting: “There is something to be said for this view, but it would have been impossible as theology had it been known that the behavior of Jesus had been marked by arrogance and violence...”<sup>(43)</sup>.

One can, it would seem, safely conclude that Paul in 2 Cor 10,1a has also concretely in mind the manner in which Jesus acted and behaved during his life on earth, after birth and before death.

### 3. *And the Corinthians?*

We may first recall the remarks of Plummer and Leivestad that the mention of Christ’s meekness and gentleness remains strange at the beginning of four chapters where Paul is certainly not soft and lenient<sup>(44)</sup>. It is, moreover, unlikely that before writing 10,1a he had planned to employ the expression “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” in order to point to the opponents’ reproach of his so-called weakness when he was present in Corinth (in v. 1b). It is only afterwards, i.e., while writing this very expression, that he came to think of that reproach. At that point, he may also have seen the meek and gentle Christ as an example for his apostolic behavior.

But what about the Corinthians? Within 10,1-11 and 12, 19-13,11 he urges the Corinthians to change their attitudes so that he himself will not have to be bold and severe during the announced third visit. But just as he most probably did not consider the absence of his eventual future severity as an imitation of Christ’s meekness and gentleness, so also can the Corinthians’ change of attitude towards Paul hardly be seen as such an imitation. What he concretely begs of the Corinthians in 10,2 is not meekness and gentleness. It has to do with a rejection of their adherence to the opponents and their again becoming “obedient” to the apostle.

<sup>(43)</sup> BARRETT, *Corinthians*, 246.

<sup>(44)</sup> See pp. 399 and 411.

Paul tries to win them over. He cannot live without their reconciliation with himself.

A much more probable interpretation of the function of the expression in 10,1a is that — besides being employed as ground for Paul's authority — it is put forward as an example for what he was going to ask from the Corinthians, but as a matter of fact did not ask. We could call such a "meekness and gentleness" an anticipation of the content of παρακαλῶ. This brings us to the insight that the ὑπακοή τοῦ Χριστοῦ of v.5 and the οἰκοδομή of v.8 are broader than the specific return of sympathy for Paul on the part of the Corinthians. These two concepts point the whole lifestyle of a Christian. The comprehensive content of "the obedience to Christ", or several aspects of it, is probably what Paul would have added after the παρακαλῶ of v.1a. The way Paul exhorts the Corinthians in 12,19–13,11 suggests that this view is correct. Barrett appropriately writes: "The existence of Christians is determined both theologically and ethically by Jesus" (45). It would appear that the mention of these characteristics of Jesus in 10,1a was intended as grounding Paul's appeal and providing an example for the Corinthians. They, too, not only Paul, should adopt these virtues.

### Conclusions

Five conclusions can be drawn from this study:

(1) If our reasoning is correct, it appears that at the end of 10,1a there is an interruption which is *not* resumed by v.2. In v.1b there is a shift in the line of thought which continues within vv.2-6.

(2) Most probably Paul's original intention while writing v.1a was to begin an exhortative section which may have contained diverse items, but which all could have constituted an imitation of Christ's meekness and gentleness. In any case that appeal or exhortation would have meant more than just a begging of Paul for "obedience" to himself (46).

(45) BARRETT, *Corinthians*, 246. Cf. H. WINDISCH, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (KEK; Göttingen 91924) 291: "Mit einem παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραύτητος τοῦ Χριστοῦ wird Paulus gern seine Hörer dazu vermahnt haben, dem Herrn in der πραύτης nachzufolgen ...".

(46) The comment of FURNISH, *2 Corinthians*, is but partly correct: "It is only in v.6 that Paul identifies that for which he is appealing — the

(3) On the other hand, reconciliation with God (cf. 5,20 and 6,1-2) and peace with one another (cf. 13,11) certainly imply reconciliation of the Corinthians with Paul and their obedience to him (10,6; cf., e.g., 7,3-4).

(4) In view of Paul's return to that exhortation in 12,19-13,11, the whole of 10,1b-13,10 (or 10,1b-12,18) should perhaps be considered as a kind of lengthy excursus: pleading, attacks and foolish boasting, not the usual parenthesis. Is 10,1b-13,10 (or 10,1b-12,18), therefore, as an excursus not somewhat analogous to the equally major (but, of course, quite differing) excursus of 2,14-7,4?

(5) One is, finally, also tempted to compare 10,1a with Rom 12,1 and 1 Thess 4,1. Was 2 Cor 10,1a not originally intended as the beginning of the final parenetical section of the letter, just like those two other verses? Of course, this is but one more, admittedly quite hypothetical, element in the argumentation for the unity of the letter<sup>(47)</sup>.

Minderbroedersstraat, 11  
B-3000 Leuven

Jan LAMBRECHT, SJ

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*obedience* of the Corinthians; but this is implicit in v. 2, where the reason for the urgency of the appeal is given" (461).

<sup>(47)</sup> For a recent survey of the whole discussion and a plea of the letter's integrity, see the three studies of R. BIERINGER in BIERINGER-LAMBRECHT, *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, 67-105: "Teilungshypothesen zum 2. Korintherbrief. Ein Forschungsüberblick; 107-130: "Der 2. Korintherbrief als ursprüngliche Einheit. Ein Forschungsüberblick"; and 131-179: "Plädoyer für die Einheitlichkeit des 2. Korintherbriefes. Literarkritische und inhaltliche Argumente".

# ANIMADVERSIO

## Elijas Dialog mit Jahwes Wort und Stimme (1 Kön 19,9b-18)

### *Das Problem*

“Was willst du hier, Elija?” — Diese Frage ergeht in 1 Kön 19 zweimal im selben Wortlaut an den resignierten Gottesmann, der auf der Flucht vor Isebel nach vierzig Tagen und Nächten zum Gottesberg Horeb gelangt ist. “Mit Leidenschaft bin ich für den Herrn, den Gott der Heere eingetreten, weil die Israeliten deinen Bund verlassen, deine Altäre zerstört und deine Propheten mit dem Schwert getötet haben. Ich allein bin übriggeblieben, und nun trachten sie auch mir nach dem Leben” lautet die Antwort Elijas in V. 10, ebenso exakt wiederholt in V. 14. Zwischen dem wiederholten Frage-Antwort-Spiel ereignet sich eine eigenartige Theophanie Jahwes, deren Ablauf im Text durcheinandergeraten zu sein scheint: In V. 11 fordert Jahwe Elija auf, aus der Höhle herauszutreten. Elija begibt sich jedoch erst in V. 13, als die Naturscheinungen von Sturm, Erdbeben und Feuer vorübergezogen sind, aus der Höhle.

Die offensichtlichen Probleme im Text sind keine Neuigkeit. Schon J. Wellhausen bemerkt zur wortwörtlich wiederholten Frage an Elija. “Das Geheimnis und die Spannung geht auf diese Weise davon”<sup>(1)</sup>. Es werden deswegen allgemein VV. 9b.10 als sekundäre Vorwegnahme der VV. 13b.14 angesehen<sup>(2)</sup>.

Weiterhin fällt auf, daß in V. 2 von der Todesdrohung Isebels berichtet wurde, die Elija in V. 3 zur lebensrettenden Flucht veranlaßt, wohingegen die Klage Elijas in VV. 10.14 unerwarteterweise die Gesamtheit der Israeliten und nicht Isebel als Verfolger anführt. In V. 4 dagegen ist es Elija selbst, der sich den Tod wünscht.

VV. 15-18 scheinen schließlich wenig im Zusammenhang mit dem Vorangehenden zu stehen. Es tritt vor allem der Unterschied hervor zwischen der Aussage Elijas, er allein sei als jahwetreuer Prophet in Israel übriggeblieben (VV. 10.14), und dem Wort Jahwes in V. 18, wonach 7000 existieren, die Jahwe nicht verlassen haben und dem Baal nicht dienen.

### *Lösungsvorschläge der Literarkritik*

In der exegetischen Forschung ist vor allem die Literarkritik an 1 Kön 19 tätig geworden, um die Spannungen und Brüche im Text zu erklären. So werden im allgemeinen literarkritisch mindestens drei ursprünglich selbständige Texte unterschieden.

<sup>(1)</sup> F. BLEEK – A. KAMPHAUSEN (Hrsg.), *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Vierte Auflage, von J. Wellhausen bearbeitet und neu herausgegeben; Berlin 41878) 246.

<sup>(2)</sup> R. SMEND, “Das Wort Jahwes an Elija, Erwägungen zur Komposition von 1 Reg xvii-xix”, *VT* 25 (1975) 525-543, 531. Ebenso Gunkel, Greßmann, Montgomery, Eißeldt, Stamm und Würthwein.

E. Würthwein<sup>(3)</sup> geht von folgendem aus: Eine ursprüngliche, alte Wallfahrtslegende, bestehend aus 19,3aα\*βb.4a.5-7\*.8aβα\*β.9abβ.11aα\*.13\*, wurde in 19,1.2.3aα\* zunächst mit Kap. 18 verbunden und somit von einem DtrP zur Flucht vor Isebel umgedeutet. Ein späterer Dtr entfaltete daraufhin das Motiv der Verfolgung in anderer Weise: Der Jahweglaube wird als von den Israeliten allgemein bekämpft dargestellt. So kommt es zur unterschiedlichen Klage Elijas in VV. 4b und 13bβ.14.

In 19,11aα\*βb.12.13aα wurde die Jahwe-Theophanie eingeschoben. Auf ihren sekundären Charakter weist die Auseinanderreißung vom Befehl an Elija (V. 11aα\*) und seiner Ausführung (V. 13\*) hin. Hier liegt eine sorgsame spätere Reflexion über den Vorgang der Gegenwart Jahwes und des prophetischen Wortempfangs vor.

In 19,15-18 werden die Straferichte Jahwes angekündigt und der Rest Israels vorgestellt. Hier werden Elischa-Traditionen auf Elija übertragen und dabei umgestaltet. Es liegen damit Verse jüngerer Datums vor.

M. Rehm<sup>(4)</sup> teilt ebenso in drei Abschnitte, geht dabei jedoch anders vor. Die eigentliche Erzählung setzt ein mit Elijas Flucht in die Wüste (VV. 3b-6), die durch die Drohung der Isebel (VV. 1-3a) eingeführt wird. Sodann folgt die Theophanie am Horeb (VV. 8b-13a), die durch den Bericht der Stärkung Elijas in der Wüste vorbereitet wird (VV. 7-8a). In den VV. 15-18 schließlich werden Aufträge an Elija mit der Szene am Horeb verknüpft. Als Einleitung dazu dienen VV. 13b.14. Sie erreichen die Doppelung der Gottesbegegnung in Naturerscheinungen und Erteilung neuer Aufträge. Dazu ist auch die Bemerkung, daß Elija aus der Höhle trat, von seinem ursprünglichen Platz in V. 11a an die Stelle in V. 13b versetzt worden.

Somit bestehen die drei in 1 Kön 19,1-18 zusammengestellte Texte aus der Flucht des Propheten, seiner Gottesbegegnungen am Horeb und der erneuten Sendung Elijas.

R. A. Carlson<sup>(5)</sup> hingegen bestreitet, daß die durchaus vorhandenen Spannungen und Wiederholungen im Text Anlaß zu literarkritischer Analyse sein können. Für ihn ist die Wiederaufnahme von VV. 9b.10 in VV. 13b.14 nicht Zeichen eines sekundären Eingriffs, sondern vielmehr eine Wiederholung als ein typisches Stilmittel der ursprünglichen Erzählung. Ihm sind seitdem in einem "holistic approach" viele Exegeten gefolgt, so beispielsweise B. S. Childs<sup>(6)</sup>, R. L. Cohn<sup>(7)</sup> und D. D. Herr<sup>(8)</sup>.

<sup>(3)</sup> E. WÜRTHWEIN, *Die Bücher der Könige. 2. Teilband* (ATD; Göttingen 1984) 227-233.

<sup>(4)</sup> E. REHM, *Das erste Buch der Könige. Ein Kommentar* (Würzburg 1979) 186.

<sup>(5)</sup> R. A. CARLSON, "Elie à l'Horeb", *VT* 19 (1969) 416-439.

<sup>(6)</sup> B. S. CHILDS, "On reading the Elijah Narratives", *Int* 34 (1980) 134-137, 129 führt programmatisch an: "It is simply not the case that the more historical and literary knowledge acquired, the better one is able to understand the biblical text. One can end up with a confused and distorted picture much like a malfunctioning television set".

<sup>(7)</sup> R. L. COHN, "The Literary Logic of 1 Kings 17-19", *JBL* 101 (1982) 333-350.

<sup>(8)</sup> D. D. HERR, "Variations of a Pattern: 1 Kings 19", *JBL* 104 (1985) 292-294.

Die Stärke der literarkritischen Analyse E. Würthweins liegt unbestritten darin, daß er die Spannung in der Theophanieschilderung auflösen kann. Bereits 1970 vertrat er, daß die Theophanie am Horeb als Einschub zu betrachten sei<sup>(9)</sup>. Bis 1984 arbeitete er dann den dtr Einfluß auf die Stelle aus, die zu den verschiedenen Kombinationen führte<sup>(10)</sup>. Sein Lösungsvorschlag zahlt jedoch einen hohen Preis: Durch die Ausscheidung der Theophanieszene löst er den Höhepunkt heraus.

Der Lösungsbeitrag M. Rehms zeichnet sich dadurch aus, daß er den auch sonst schon beobachteten, wohl gewollten Doppelungen Rechnung trägt: Seine Analyse kann das zweimalige Auftreten des Engels als Stärkung in der Wüste und Einleitung der Gottesbegegnung erklären. Auch die Wiederholung der VV. 9b.10 in 13b.14 wird zum geschickten Schachzug, um eine Aufspaltung der Theophanie in Naturerscheinung und Neubeauftragung zu erreichen. Jedoch muß dafür V. 13b nach V. 11a gezogen werden.

Grundsätzlich läßt sich sagen, daß in der Forschung mehr und mehr Skepsis aufkommt, ob sich das Rätselhafte des 19. Kapitels auf dem Wege der Literarkritik wirklich lösen läßt. Ist zur sogenannten Dublette der VV. 9b.10 in VV. 13b.14 wirklich schon alles gesagt, wenn sie als sekundär ausgeschieden wird? S. Wagner bemerkt dazu kritisch: "Warum befriedigt den Textinterpreten des ausgehenden 20. Jahrhunderts nur die Ein-Linearität einer verschrifteten Aussage, und warum ist ihm eine Mehr-Linearität oder gar gegensinnige Linearität unbehaglich?"<sup>(11)</sup>.

#### *Neuansatz an der Doppelung von Frage und Antwort in VV. 9b.10 und 13b.14*

Der Kritik Wagners soll hier Raum gegeben werden. Es ist zu versuchen, die im Text vorliegenden Spannungen auf eine neue Weise zu verhandeln: Es soll nicht darum gehen, sie aufzulösen, sondern es soll vielmehr darum gehen, ihren als gewollt oder zumindest in Kauf genommen Einfluß auf das Gesamt des Textes und sein Verständnis zu erheben. Gegenüber der früheren These, die Kapitel 1 Kön 17–19 bestünden aus lose miteinander verknüpften Einzelerzählungen, ist in der jüngeren Forschung der Autor der Komposition 1 Kön 17–19 mehr und mehr als "großer Künstler"<sup>(12)</sup> hervorgetreten. Der Technik dieses großen Künstlers, dessen Verantwortlichkeit für den Jetzttext hier postuliert wird, soll auf neue Weise auf den Grund gegangen werden.

<sup>(9)</sup> E. WÜRTHWEIN, "Elijah at Horeb: Reflexions on 1 Kings 19:9-18", *Proclamation and Presence* (FS. G. H. Davies; London 1970) 152-166, 159: "Such a subtle and careful description of the theophany, which with its negative statements clearly aims at precise delineation, would stylistically only signify no break within the story if its striking individuality were borne out in what followed or were even demanded by the context. This is not the case".

<sup>(10)</sup> WÜRTHWEIN, *Könige*, 230, Anm. 21: "Die Gesamtauffassung von 19,1-18 ist in diesem Kommentar an mehreren Stellen modifiziert mit Rücksicht auf den erst seither stärker in Blick getretenen dtr. Anteil".

<sup>(11)</sup> S. WAGNER, "Elia am Horeb. Methodologische und theologische Überlegungen zu 1 Reg 19", *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im Alten Israel* (FS. S. Herrmann; Stuttgart 1991) 415-424, 416.

<sup>(12)</sup> SMEND, "Wort Jahwes", 541.

So ist erneut zu fragen, ob es möglich ist, die Wiederholung der VV.9b.10 in 13b.14 im Jetzttext als eine gezielte Wiederaufnahme zu verstehen.

Drei Beobachtungen scheinen mir dazu wichtig:

1. Entscheidend für das Verständnis des Ablaufs der Theophanie der VV.11b.12 ist die Übersetzung von וְהָיָה יְהוָה עֹבֵר in V.11a. Tatsächlich kommen zwei Übersetzungsmöglichkeiten in Frage: Es gilt zu entscheiden, ob mit Vergangenheit "siehe, Jahwe zog vorüber" zu übersetzen ist, oder ob futurisch "siehe, Jahwe wird vorüberziehen" wiedergegeben werden sollte. Ersteres läßt einen neuen Satz beginnen und leitet die folgende Theophanie ein, wirft dann aber die Probleme auf, daß daraufhin berichtet wird, daß weder Jahwe vorüberzieht, noch Elija zu diesem Zweck aus der Höhle tritt. Eine futurische Übersetzung hingegen begreift וְהָיָה יְהוָה עֹבֵר als noch zur direkten Rede Jahwes gehörend. Die Beobachtung, daß Jahwe in der 3. Person von sich selbst spricht, stellt dabei kein Problem dar, da das schon im sicher zur direkten Rede gehörenden Satzteil וְעַמְדָּתָּ בְּהָרָא לְפָנַי יְהוָה der Fall war; Jahwe spricht also hier grundsätzlich in der 3. Person von sich selbst. Auch LXX belegt παρελεύσεται κύριος, wobei sie zuvor die gesamte Szene auf αἶπτον verlagert hat. Der sinnvollere Zusammenhang mit dem Folgenden muß meines Erachtens für eine futurische Übersetzung (*Futurum instans*)<sup>(13)</sup> sprechen, wie bei neueren Übersetzungen<sup>(14)</sup> bereits belegt. Somit läßt sich der Befehl an Elija zum Heraustreten aus der Höhle für den Moment des wirklichen Vorüberziehens Jahwes verstehen.

2. Nimmt man dann aber den Jetzttext ernst, so ist קוֹל דִּמְמָה וְדָקָה auf die Präsenz Jahwes hin zu deuten. Für dessen Übersetzung sind nun eine Reihe von Vorschlägen gemacht worden, neben dem "leisen, sanften Säuseln" der EÜ ist bei J. Jeremias die "(Wind-)Stille"<sup>(15)</sup> zu finden, in der NRSV "a sound of sheer silence", wohingegen J. Lust "a roaring thunderous sound"<sup>(16)</sup> ermittelt. Die RSV belegt "a still small voice" und gewährleistet damit, den in V.13 auftretenden קוֹל auch in der Übersetzung mit dem קוֹל דִּמְמָה וְדָקָה von V.12 in Verbindung zu bringen: Elija deutet den קוֹל דִּמְמָה וְדָקָה als Präsenz Jahwes, tritt aus der Höhle heraus und vernimmt dann einen קוֹל, der ihn mit der exakt wiederholten Frage "Was willst du hier, Elija?" anspricht. In V.9b aber war der Dialog durch den וְהָיָה דְּבַר-יְהוָה eingeleitet worden. Wenn Elija mit derselben Person spricht, sind וְהָיָה דְּבַר-יְהוָה und קוֹל Repräsentanten desselben Dialogpartners: Die Stimme in V.13b ist implizit die Stimme Jahwes. Kein Leser würde daran einen Zweifel lassen. Nun tut sich aber die Frage auf, warum in V.13b nicht schlichtweg wieder דְּבַר-יְהוָה in der Einleitungsformel wiederholt wird. Diese Abweichung kann bei der sonstigen wortwörtlichen Wiederholung von VV.9b.10 in 13b.14 nicht unbewußt geschehen sein. Als einzige

<sup>(13)</sup> Zum futurischen Gebrauch des Partizipiums mit הָיָה vgl. GK §116p.

<sup>(14)</sup> Vgl. beispielsweise NRSV "for the LORD is about to pass by".

<sup>(15)</sup> J. JEREMIAS, *Theophanie. Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1965) 112.

<sup>(16)</sup> J. LUST, "A Gentle Breeze or a Roaring Thunderous Sound? Elijah at Horeb; 1 Kings xix 12", VT 25 (1975) 110-115.



Erklärung bleibt nun, daß hier mit der Einleitung durch קול in V.13 bewußt an den in V.12 vorausgehenden קול דממה דקה angeknüpft werden soll. קול kann deswegen in V.12 nicht einfach "Laut, Geräusch" bedeuten, sondern ist "Stimme", jedoch tritt zu dieser Stimme in Apposition דממה "Säuseln, lindes Wehen". Die beiden Begriffe finden sich ebenso in Ijob 4,16, hier mit ך verknüpft: קול דממה וקול אשמע "ich höre eine Stimme flüstern" (EÜ), "there was a silence, then I heard a voice" (RSV). Um beide Aspekte, die Stimme und die eintretende Stille nach den tosenden Naturphänomenen, auszudrücken, ordne ich die Begriffe wie in Ijob 4,16 aufeinander zu und übersetze "eine Stimme (in) der (Wind-)Stille". Es kommt damit am besten zum Ausdruck, daß Elija gleichzeitig das Ende der Naturgewalten wahrnimmt und eine Stimme hört.

3. Der Bezogenheit der Begriffe דבר-יהוה (V.9) und קול (V.13) aufeinander ist noch weiter nachzugehen. Tatsächlich liegt im Text die Folge der Begriffe דבר-יהוה (V.9) – קול דממה דקה (V.12) – קול (V.13) – יהוה (V.15) vor, ohne daß seit V.9 der Dialogpartner Elijas gewechselt hat. Die Spannung zwischen diesen verschiedenen Begriffen gilt es zunächst festzustellen, ja als die eigentliche Spannung dieser Verse auszumachen. Die Wiederholung der VV.9b.10 in 13b.14 selbst dagegen konstituiert an sich noch keine Spannung, sondern zeigt, wie die Naturscheinungen Sturm, Erdbeben und Feuer an Elija vorüberziehen, ohne Elijas Verzweiflung zu verändern: Vor wie nach dieser eigentümlichen Art einer Theophanie klagt Elija Jahwe in denselben Worten sein Leid. Erst die neuen Aufträge in VV.15-18 vermögen es, ihn aus der Krise zu führen.

#### *Die eigenartige Theophanie der VV.11b-12*

Es ist somit der Spannung zwischen "Wort Jahwes" und "Stimme" im vorliegenden Jetzttext weiter nachzugehen und zu klären, warum der Autor des Jetzttextes diese verschiedenen Begriffe einsetzt. Dies soll zunächst in einer Untersuchung der Theophanie der VV.11b-12 geschehen, die im Zentrum der Spannung zwischen דבר-יהוה in V.9b und קול in V.13b steht und im Frage-Antwort-Spiel zwischen Jahwe und Elija quasi eine Rahmung erfährt.

In Ps 29,3-9b werden ebenso wie in 1 Kön 19 Aussagen über die Stimme Jahwes im Kontext einer Theophanie gemacht: Die "Stimme Jahwes" wird dabei in Ps 29,3b.5b.8b.9b jeweils als synonymes Pendant durch "Jahwe" aufgenommen, lediglich in V.4b wird die "Stimme Jahwes" wiederholt. Sie ist nun selbst am Werk, wenn Felsen zerbrechen, die Wüste bebt und weitere Erscheinungen in der Natur- und Tierwelt auftreten. Der קול יהוה gilt hier also als Metapher oder Synechdoche und zeigt Jahwes Gegenwart und Handeln: Wenn der קול יהוה ertönt, geschieht Theophanie.

In diesem Zusammenhang muß nun auffallen, daß 1 Kön 19,11baca.12ab zunächst ebenso eine Theophanie Jahwes zu beschreiben scheint. Wie in Ps 29,3 wird dargestellt, welche Naturerscheinungen auftreten. Neu und unvermittelt tritt die Negation durch לֹא in VV.11bβcβ.12aβ auf, die *expressis verbis* hervorhebt, daß Jahwe nicht in den Naturerscheinungen anwesend ist:



Texten um Bedingungen, Gegebenheiten und Grenzen der Erfahrbarkeit und Präsenz Jahwes geht. Beiderseits herrschen auffälligerweise Negationen vor (Ex 33,20.23; 1 Kön 19,11b.c.12). Sie korrigieren bestehende Standpunkte und Vorstellungen: In polemischer Tendenz wird Mose in Schranken gewiesen: Nur den Rücken Jahwes darf Mose schauen, nicht aber sein Angesicht. Elija hingegen erfährt, daß Jahwe nicht in Sturm, Erdbeben und Feuer da ist, sondern in der leisen Windstille, in der seine Stimme, d.h. sein Wort, hörbar wird. So werden neben der Negation auch Neudefinitionen gefaßt, wie die Frage der Präsenz bzw. Schaubarkeit Jahwes durch den Menschen zu beantworten ist. So erhält der Protagonist neben Korrektur auch Neuorientierung.

Für 1 Kön 19 läßt sich aus diesem Zusammenhang folgern, daß die Theophanie in VV. 11b-12 im Zentrum der Spannung zwischen "Wort Jahwes" und "Stimme" steht, um als Neudefinition der Form der Präsenz Jahwes die spektakulären Naturphänomene auszuschließen und demgegenüber die schlichte Stimme in der Windstille als Form der Anwesenheit Jahwes zu qualifizieren. Der Text kann dies nur wirksam tun, indem er eine Analogie zu Mose aufbaut, die die Bilder der großen Theophanien im Leser wachruft, um dann vor diesem Hintergrund eine Neudefinition zu entwickeln. Es deutet sich so ein Übergang von der mosaïschen Auftragserteilung in Umfeld von Theophanien hin zu einem prophetischen Wortempfang in Form des דְּבַר־יְהוָה an.

### *Deutungsversuch*

Darin liegt nun eine äußerst subtile, mehrschichtige Polemik, die dem Israeliten jedoch nicht entgangen sein dürfte:

Zunächst einmal wird jegliche Naturerscheinung für die Theophanie Jahwes disqualifiziert: Es gibt keine Vermischung Jahwes mit kosmischen Phänomenen.

Auf eine weitere Spur führt uns im Zusammenhang damit die nähere Betrachtung des Ausdrucks קוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה. Wie J. Strugnell<sup>(19)</sup> ausgeführt hat, bezeichnet דְּמָמָה in den Qumrantexten in 4Qsl 40 24,2ff. eine Art Eng-elgesang in himmlischer Liturgie, der als bewußter Gegensatz zum Gellen, Tosen und Dröhnen anderer Stimmen und Geräusche komponiert ist. So läßt sich eine Parallele zu unserer Stelle gerade im polemischen Gegensatz ziehen. Der Hinweis, daß der Begriff im Zusammenhang des Kultus im himmlischen Tempel als Vorbild des Kultus im irdischen Tempel auftaucht, ist wertvoll. J. Jeremias schließt daraus, "daß דְּמָמָה von jeher die kultische Gegenwart Jahwes umschrieb, man also in diesen Kreisen Jahwes Kommen zu Elia nicht anders beschrieb, als man von seiner Gegenwart im Kultus redete. Denn nirgends sind die Termini des Jahwe-Glaubens jahrhundertlang so sehr die gleichen geblieben wie im Kultus. Sollten diese Kreise deswegen die Gewalten des Sturmes, des Erdbebens und des Feuers zu von Jahwe getrennten Begleiterscheinungen degradiert haben, weil sie den Jahwe-Kultus rein erhalten wollten?"<sup>(20)</sup>. Auch diese Spitze der Polemik ist ernstzuneh-

<sup>(19)</sup> J. STRUGNELL, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumrân – 4Q SEREK ŠĪROT 'ÔLAT HAŠŠABĀT", VTS VII (Leiden 1960) 318-345, 336-343.

<sup>(20)</sup> JEREMIAS, *Theophanie*, 115.

men, umso mehr, als noch im 18. Kapitel derselbe Elija Feuer vom Himmel herabgerufen hatte, um den Opferstier für Jahwe zu entflammen und ihm so zum Sieg über die Baalspriester zu verhelfen.

Wenn aber die in der Szene angelegte Polemik nicht ohne Neudefinition ausläuft, so muß nun das besondere Augenmerk darauf gerichtet werden, was an die Stelle der disqualifizierten Naturerscheinungen tritt: Als Konsequenz unserer Untersuchung stellt sich heraus, daß die Polemik der אל-Theophanie emphatisch in die קול-Theophanie mündet. Wenn der Sitz im Leben der Gattung Theophanie darin bestand, daß Theophanietexte die Begehung des Jerusalemer Festkultes widerspiegeln, so ist als die Stoßrichtung der Polemik festzuhalten, daß sich Theophanie eben nicht vordergründig in kosmischen Repräsentationen abspielt, sondern im Wort Jahwes, im דְּבַר-יְהוָה, Offenbarung geschieht.

### *Die Frage nach Autor und Leser*

Die Frage nach dem Autor, der dem Text die jetzige Form verliehen hat, läßt abschließend nur Spekulationen zu. Sie führt wohl in nachexilische Zeit. J. Briend hat jüngst die Einflüsse der Moseanalogie im Text als nachexilische *relectures*<sup>(21)</sup> des ursprünglichen Textes nachgewiesen. 1 Kön 19, dessen Text zweifelsohne viele Umgestaltungen erfahren hat, läßt sich in seiner Jetztgestalt als Zeuge einer späten, ja nachprophetischen Zeit deuten, in der der Autor versucht, durch die kontrastierende Zusammenstellung zweier völlig unterschiedlicher Theophanievorstellungen, der spektakulären Naturerscheinungen und des Ergehens des Wortes Jahwes, Gottesbild und Gotteserfahrung für seine Hörer neu zu deuten und auszuformulieren: Sturm, Erdbeben und Feuer können den resignierten Elija nicht aus der Verzweiflung reißen, allein die Stimme Jahwes, die seinem Wort zugeordnet wird, vermag ihn unspektakulär neu zu berufen.

Der Leser der Elija-Elischa-Geschichten ist eingeladen, den Weg Elias vom Karmel, wo Gott sich im Feuer machtvoll zeigte, hin zum Horeb mitzugehen, wo Jahwe ein ganz anderer zu sein scheint. Ein Gott, der gerade nicht selbst eingreift durch einen Machterweis, sondern einzig durch den Menschen handelt, den er durch sein Wort ruft.

So gilt es, aus dem Gegensatz der Kapitel 1 Kön 18 und 19 heraus verschiedene Gottesbilder zu unterscheiden und daraus das wahre zu erkennen. Das Bild Jahwes, der Sturm, Erdbeben und Feuer verneint, während er in der Windstille spricht. Sicherlich zeigen VV. 15-18 erneut ein weniger friedliches Bild. Doch gilt auch für sie: Gott hält daran fest, durch Menschen zu handeln, selbst durch Hasael oder Jehu. So garantiert er selbst einen "Rest" Israels.

Hans-Sachs-Straße 18  
D-97616 Bad Neustadt

Jürgen VORNDRAN

<sup>(21)</sup> J. BRIEND, *Dieu dans l'Écriture* (LD 150; Paris 1992) 36.

# RECENSIONES

## Vetus Testamentum

Christoph LEVIN, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157). Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993. 456 p. 15,5 × 23,5. DM 88,—

L'intention de cette *Habilitationschrift*, présentée à Göttingen et dédiée à R. Smend, apparaît dans le titre du premier chapitre: *Das redaktionsgeschichtliche Problem des Tetrateuchs*. Le vrai problème n'est pas *formgeschichtlich* (von Rad) ou *überlieferungsgeschichtlich* (Rendtorff); il touche à l'histoire de la rédaction et, de plus, l'analyse se limite à Gn-Nb. Ce premier chapitre présente un intelligent «état de la question» des études sur le Yahwiste depuis le milieu du 18ème siècle jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Il est suivi de la thèse de l'A.: J est un rédacteur exilique qui a intégré dans une œuvre nouvelle des fragments plus anciens; son but est de redonner espoir aux exilés (9-35). Suit un second chapitre où L. analyse quelques textes fondamentaux pour étayer son hypothèse (36-50). Le troisième chapitre contient une traduction de l'œuvre du Yahwiste qui met en relief par divers artifices techniques les sources pré-yahwistes (J<sup>Q</sup>), le texte du Yahwiste (J<sup>R</sup>) et les ajouts postérieurs (51-79). Le lecteur constatera que le Yahwiste de L. subit une sérieuse cure d'amaigrissement. Ont disparu: le serpent du jardin (Gn 3,1-6a\*.13b-14), le séjour d'Abraham en Égypte (Gn 12,10-20), l'histoire de Juda et Tamar (Gen 38), le récit des plaies (Ex 7-12) et, de tout le séjour d'Israël au désert, il ne reste que quelques fragments (76-79). Par contre, Gn 24\* fait partie de J. Dans l'histoire de Joseph, on trouve Gn 39 (Joseph et Potiphar) et l'histoire des songes de Pharaon (Gen 41), mais les chap. 42-45 sont réduits à la portion congrue (73-74). L'impression, vraie ou fausse, est que le récit s'amincit au fur et à mesure que l'on avance.

«Le texte du Yahwiste» (80-388) est la partie la plus imposante du travail. L. analyse chaque «section narrative» de J dans l'ordre suivant: la rédaction yahwiste; les sources pré-yahwistes; les additions post-yahwistes qui précèdent la réunion de J et P, et celles qui la suivent. Enfin, quelques chapitres conclusifs abordent des questions de synthèse comme «les sources du Yahwiste» (389-398); «la langue du Yahwiste» (399-413; un petit «lexique du Yahwiste» à la manière de Holzinger ou Driver); «le message du Yahwiste» (414-435); «l'histoire de la rédaction post-yahwiste» (436-441). Le livre se termine par une bibliographie (442-456), mais on ne trouve aucun index.

«Le message du Yahwiste» contient nombre de réflexions intéressantes, bien que le lecteur puisse avoir çà et là l'impression qu'il s'agit de la théologie d'un Yahwiste «taillé sur mesure». Selon L., J écrit une «étiologie d'Israël» ou «l'épopée nationale d'Israël» (434) qui va de la création

jusqu'au seuil de la terre promise. Les généalogies forment le fil conducteur de ce récit éclectique. La sortie d'Égypte en est le point focal, mais J ne contient aucun récit de la conquête. Les récits dépeignent la situation de personnes qui vivent à l'étranger, comme Israël durant l'exil. Même Abraham vit en émigré dans une terre occupée par les Cananéens. La théologie du Yahwiste est celle de la religion populaire avec son insistance sur la famille et la fraternité, ce qui conduit parfois à une «double morale». Le «Dieu des pères» n'est pas lié à un lieu, mais accompagne son peuple partout où il va. Il est aussi le «Dieu du ciel» ou le «Dieu du ciel et de la terre», c'est-à-dire le Dieu de l'univers. L'histoire décrit comment ce Dieu bénit et maudit, et comment sa bénédiction peu à peu se concentre sur la lignée qui conduit à Abraham, puis accompagne Israël jusque dans les plaines de Moab où Balaam le bénit une dernière fois.

Le Yahwiste est postérieur au Deutéronome dont il refuse la centralisation du culte pour proclamer que Dieu peut se révéler et être honoré partout. Cependant, il précède l'œuvre deutéronomiste. Enfin, J est plus ancien que le second Isaïe qui serait de toute façon postexilique. Très probablement, J a composé son œuvre à Babylone, en exil et pour les exilés. Il faisait partie de l'aristocratie de Jérusalem qui fut déportée en 597 et 587.

Le lecteur trouvera aussi dans le dernier chapitre des remarques de valeur. Pour L., le récit sacerdotal est un écrit indépendant et une refonte de JE. Le Pentateuque actuel est dû à la combinaison de deux «sources»: J et P, auxquels est venu s'ajouter le Deutéronome. L. en revient donc à une théorie des «deux sources». La rédaction finale consiste en une série d'ajouts et de corrections. Un jour, il a été simplement décidé de mettre un point final à ces continuelles révisions. Il n'y a donc jamais eu de travail organique et systématique qui aurait donné au texte son visage définitif. Pour L., il n'y a que deux exemples de textes où J et P ont été entrelacés dans le Pentateuque actuel: le récit du déluge (Gn 6-9) et celui du passage de la mer (Ex 14). Il invoque une raison simple pour ce phénomène: la génération du déluge et les Égyptiens ne pouvaient mourir qu'une fois et il n'était donc possible de raconter la chose qu'une fois. Quant à l'Élohiste, L. donne raison à Rudolph après soixante ans: c'est un *Irrweg* de la critique.

La thèse de L. reflète la tendance actuelle à voir dans le Yahwiste une œuvre rédactionnelle tardive (cf. Van Seters, Whybray, H. H. Schmid, Rose, Zenger, les thèses de Blum...). Il ne faudrait sans doute pas exagérer les ressemblances, mais elles existent. De plus, L. combine en fait les trois vieux modèles explicatifs du Pentateuque: les sources pré-yahwistes sont des «fragments»; le Yahwiste y ajoute ses «compléments»; et on aboutit ainsi à un «document J» (ou JE: *Jahwist und Ergänzungen*) à côté du «document P» (34, 437-440).

La description du Yahwiste est sans doute une des meilleures parties de cet ouvrage (414-430). Les quelques notes sur l'écrit sacerdotal et la rédaction finale ne manquent pas de pertinence (cf. D. Carr, *CBQ* 57 [1995] 354-355). Les difficultés, par ailleurs, ne manquent pas. Elles touchent principalement la *Literarkritik* et certaines argumentations (cf. E. Blum, *TLZ* 120 [1995] 786-790). «Eine literarkritische Möglichkeit ist jedoch noch

keine literarkritische Notwendigkeit» (M. Noth, *1 Könige* [BKAT 9/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969] 246). Cette phrase revint souvent l'à l'esprit en parcourant les analyses de L. Nous voudrions en citer quelques exemples significatifs.

Gn 29, la rencontre de Jacob et Rachel auprès du puits, est selon L. un texte rédactionnel (J<sup>R</sup>), inséré entre deux «notices» plus anciennes: 29,1 et 16 qui disaient ceci: «Jacob se mit en route et s'en alla au pays des gens de l'Orient. Laban avait deux filles; l'aînée s'appelait Léa, la plus jeune Rachel». Entre ces deux phrases, J introduit un récit dont il faut retrancher 29,2aβ.3.7-10 et une partie des vv. 6 et 12 (65-66). Si 29,16 n'appartient pas au récit de la rencontre de Jacob avec Rachel, c'est parce qu'il fait double emploi avec la présentation de Rachel en 29,6 (221; cf. Dillmann, *Genesis*, 338). Cette reconstruction, cependant, reste fragile. La «source pré-yahwiste» offre un texte insatisfaisant et, à la limite, incompréhensible. Quand Jacob arrive-t-il chez Laban? Ensuite, l'argument invoqué pour séparer 29,2\*-3.7-10 de 29,16 est sujet à caution. Les informations données au lecteur dans l'exposition d'un récit sont souvent placées à l'endroit où elles sont plus utiles à l'action (voir Gn 3,1; 12,11; 18,11; 39,6; Jg 4,17b; 8,19; 11,34; Jon 3,2; Rt 2,1 ...). Or, en 29,16, le narrateur introduit le récit du mariage de Jacob et, à plus longue échéance, celui de la rivalité entre Léa et Rachel. Au début de cet épisode, il présente les deux sœurs, en insistant sur ce qui les sépare: l'une est l'aînée, l'autre la plus jeune; l'une est belle et l'autre non; l'une est aimée, l'autre non. Gn 16,1 procède de la même façon en ce qui concerne Sara et Hagar. Il n'y a donc pas «doublet», mais répétition avec supplément indispensable d'information. Stylistiquement, il n'y a d'ailleurs aucune raison d'attribuer à deux mains différentes 29,16.18 et 29,17, comme le veut L. Cela est *möglich*, mais certainement pas *notwendig*. Cf. M. Sternberg, "The Structure of Repetition", *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* [Bloomington 1985] 365-440).

De plus, en Gn 29,1-15, L. attribue à un rédacteur tardif tout ce qui concerne la «pierre» et il ne reste qu'un sommaire sans beaucoup de saveur: Rachel apparaît sur la scène et Jacob va l'embrasser (66). J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Assen – Amsterdam 1975) 123-126 aurait sans doute permis d'ajouter un peu de sel à l'analyse, même s'il utilise une autre méthode. Enfin, dans la proposition de L., il reste peu de chose de la «scène typique» de la rencontre auprès du puits (voir R. Alter, «Biblical Type-Scenes and the Uses of Convention», *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York 1981] 47-62). Pourquoi Jacob doit-il rencontrer Rachel avant Laban? Les récits anciens ne contenaient-ils que des ébauches lapidaires?

Autre exemple du même type en Gn 18. Dans le récit pré-yahwiste, les hôtes d'Abraham reçoivent uniquement du lait et du beurre (18,8). Il faut attendre le rédacteur jahwiste exilique pour trouver des galettes (*'uggôt*; 18,6). Quant au «veau gras», il n'arrive qu'après l'exil, parce que le vocabulaire est culturel (18,7.8\*) (57, 153-158). Or, le lait et le beurre (ou lait caillé?) sont la nourriture des enfants (Is 7,15; cf. 7,22) ou la nourriture frugale offerte en hâte à des fugitifs affamés et assoiffés (Jg 4,19; 5,25; 2 S 17,29); il ne peut guère s'agir d'un repas complet (Gn 18,5; cf. 2 S 17,28-29). Les «galettes», de leur côté, servent à manger la viande puisqu'on ne disposait

pas d'assiettes (voir Ex 12,8; Jg 6,19-21; 1 S 28,22-25). C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi elles ne sont pas mentionnées au cours du repas (Gn 18,8). Enfin, s'il est vrai que l'expression *ben-bāqār* se retrouve dans bien des textes culturels, son sens n'est pas nécessairement culturel. Existe-t-il un mot «profane» pour dire «jeune veau»? Les vv. 7-8 décrivent-ils une action culturelle (cf. Jg 13,16.19-20)?

Toujours à propos de Gn 18,1-15, L. estime que Sara fait partie des ajouts de J<sup>R</sup> parce qu'une scène biblique ne compte que deux personnages (A. Olrik, «Epische Gesetze der Volksdichtung», *ZDA* 51 [1909] 5; Levin, 154). Mais Olrik dit seulement que dans un récit ancien, il n'y a jamais plus de deux personnages actifs sur scène. Cette loi est d'ailleurs respectée en Gn 18. Les épisodes, quant à eux, peuvent comporter plus de deux personnages (H. Gunkel, *Genesis* [Göttingen <sup>3</sup>1910] xxxv).

De façon plus générale, on remarquera que L. tient peu compte dans ses analyses de certaines techniques narratives comme le sommaire proleptique (Gn 18,1; 27,23; 41,7; Ex 3,2); le changement de perspective (Gn 18,1-2; Ex 2,6; 3,2); la progression vers un *climax* (Gn 28,12-13); la répétition de mots clés (Gn 16,2.4-5.11; 28,16; Ex 2,21); l'usage du double *way-yō'mer* (Gn 19,9; 30,27-28) qui n'est pas nécessairement signe d'un travail rédactionnel (contre Gunkel, *Genesis*, 209; cf. S.A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking* [VTS 46; Leiden 1992] 73-81); et il a tendance à attribuer à une main tardive les éléments dramatiques ou pittoresques des récits.

La multitude des ajouts rédactionnels fait aussi problème, ne fût-ce que du point de vue matériel. Pour modifier un texte, il fallait soit réécrire tout le rouleau, soit écrire dans les marges qui étaient souvent étroites. Combien de fois pouvait-on répéter l'opération? Quel en était le coût? Et qui avait l'autorité d'altérer ces textes?

Il faut donc avouer que L. n'a pas toujours la main heureuse dans son travail de dissection. Un dialogue plus nourri avec ceux qui ont fait d'autres options ou suivi d'autres sentiers méthodologiques aurait été profitable.

Via della Pilotta, 25  
I-00187 Roma

Jean Louis SKA

Eduard NIELSEN, *Deuteronomium* (HAT I/6). Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995. x-311 S. 17 × 24. DM 88,—

Fidèle à la formule du HAT, le commentaire de Nielsen rassemble une documentation très riche qui permet de retracer les principales études sur le Deutéronome depuis un siècle. Le tout se présente en un style concis, avec références précises, selon la formule éprouvée de la collection. En un sens, voilà un commentaire très classique, peut-être trop classique, ce qui n'enlève rien à la richesse des renseignements qu'il nous fournit.

Sa «préhistoire» nous permet d'en comprendre certaines limites (voir la préface). Dès 1933, Otto Eissfeldt confia la rédaction du commentaire sur le Deutéronome au professeur Aage Bentzen (décédé en 1953). Le texte incomplet, laissé par Bentzen, ne pouvait être publié sans révision. Le 22 oc-



tobre 1954 Eissfeldt demanda donc à Nielsen de reprendre le travail et de le mener à terme. Successeur à la chaire de Bentzen, Nielsen n'a pu compléter son travail qu'en 1993!

On trouve en ce commentaire un heureux et curieux mélange de « nova et vetera ». En un sens, ce volume ne peut pas être considéré comme témoin privilégié des recherches les plus récentes, bien qu'il les connaisse et en fasse état; par ailleurs, il date quelque peu, car il s'attarde à identifier les différentes strates ou sources du Deutéronome en s'appuyant sur les études publiées à partir de 1894. L'avantage sera de pouvoir attribuer à qui de droit l'origine de telle ou telle prise de position, qu'il s'agisse de critique textuelle ou de critique des sources du Pentateuque. On peut regretter que l'A. ne montre pas suffisamment comment lire et interpréter le texte final du Deutéronome: sa lecture, en effet, se concentre tellement sur l'étude du texte en ses petites unités qu'on trouve peu d'explications visant des ensembles plus vastes. On a l'impression de se trouver devant un texte atomisé, quelque peu décomposé et laissé en parties détachées.

On peut certes trouver là un antidote contre ces structures et figures d'ensemble qu'une certaine naïveté exégétique nous sert abondamment, sans toujours mieux expliquer le texte à lire. Il reste que, hypothèse pour hypothèse, il faut savoir de quoi l'on discute, et ce commentaire fournit les éléments permettant d'apprécier une ligne de recherche moins fréquentée de nos jours. Pièces à l'appui, ce commentaire nous permet de refaire une bonne partie de l'histoire de l'exégèse du Deutéronome au cours du siècle qui s'achève, ce qui est un avantage certain.

En dix-huit pages, une brève introduction s'explique sur les points suivants concernant le Deutéronome: 1. Nom et contenu; 2. Construction; 3. Origine du livre; 4. Lien à la réforme de Josias; 5. Programme, en deux parties, soit la « pureté et l'unité du culte » (« Reinheit des Kultes; Einheit des Kultes »); 6. Enfin, quelques notes sur la teneur du commentaire. Nielsen indique clairement sa dette envers des auteurs tels que Hölscher, Steuernagel pour la « Literarkritik », Seitz et Merendino pour la « Redaktionsgeschichte », Lohfink et Plöger pour la structure du Deutéronome. Pour l'exégèse de détail, il souligne sa dette envers A. Dillmann et S. R. Driver. Enfin, aux p. 14-18, une bibliographie sélective, de caractère international, présente divers aspects ou sections du Deutéronome (de 1886 à 1992). Bien sûr, une telle bibliographie est le résultat d'un choix personnel; bien des oublis pourraient être signalés. Il faut toutefois ajouter que des références additionnelles, assez nombreuses, se trouvent entre parenthèses dans le corps du commentaire.

Je ne m'attarderai pas à discuter de la division du texte en grandes ou en petites unités, si ce n'est pour indiquer les divisions majeures, selon les chapitres du Deutéronome: 1-4; 5-11; 12-25; 26-30; 31-34. Il est curieux que les vv. 44-49 du ch. 4 soient rattachés à ce qui précède et que, sans explication sérieuse, une césure majeure soit placée entre les ch. 1-4 et les ch. 5-11. N'y a-t-il pas un certain sens à distinguer les ch. 1-11 de la collection des lois contenues dans les ch. 12-26 (noter ici que le ch. 26 fait partie de l'appendice liturgique des ch. 26-30)? On pourra aussi discuter la façon de subdiviser les péricopes. Évidemment, ce commentaire n'a pas mis l'ac-

cent sur l'analyse des structures! Il nous est donc permis de passer rapidement sur ces questions. Un exemple illustrera le problème soulevé ici: le «discours» du ch. 4,1-40 est étudié par sections: vv.1-8.9-24.25-40, sans qu'aucune insistance ne soit mise sur l'unité que constituerait un tel discours. Le commentaire de M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB 5; New York 1991), bien que signalé dans la bibliographie, n'a sans doute pas pu servir lors de la rédaction du volume. Par ailleurs, à propos des études de S. Mittmann et de G. Braulik sur le même texte, on sent nettement que Nielsen opte pour l'étude «atomisante» de Mittmann, d'autant plus qu'il considère que 4,1-2 fait partie du texte deutéronomique, alors que tout le reste est attribué à la rédaction deutéronomiste.

Le commentaire (19-311) suit fidèlement un schéma identique pour chaque péricope: 1) traduction en allemand, 2) brèves notes de critique textuelle, 3) «Literarkritisches» (on pourrait dire de Steuernagel à Mittmann), 4) «Redaktions- und Traditionsgeschichtliches» (par exemple Alt, Noth, Rudolph, Wolff, Lohfink, Braulik), 5) «Formkritik und Struktur» (partie plus neuve, souvent limitée à des éléments structurant de petites unités seulement), enfin, 6) des notes de lecture rattachées aux versets en particulier (explication de termes, indication de parallèles, étude de quelques thèmes, le tout très succinctement).

La typographie fait voir dans la traduction comment Nielsen répartit le texte, tout en reconnaissant (13) qu'une telle répartition reste hypothétique. Voici les quatre «strates» indiquées: 1) «Vor- und Früh-Deuteronomisches», 2) «Deuteronomisches», 3) «Deuteronomistisches und Nach-Deuteronomistisches», 4) «Priesterschriftliches». C'est en même temps trop précis et trop vague. En effet, on laisse entendre qu'il existe six couches de texte (groupées en quatre); par ailleurs, contrairement à une certaine mode exégétique, l'A. évite de se prononcer sur la subdivision en deux ou trois rédactions deutéronomistes. Il suffit de parcourir la traduction, en surveillant l'attribution indiquée, pour mesurer que l'hypothèse présentée ici semble pouvoir découper le texte, avec confiance, à l'intérieur même d'un verset! On pourra voir des cas extrêmes dans les passages suivants: Dt 1,1-5.19-46; les ch. 14-16; 19,14-21; les ch. 20-27 et, bien sûr, les ch. 31-34. La confiance se dilue dans le vague qu'engendre l'hypothèse, ce qui contribue à discréditer une méthode de recherche qui avait permis de signaler bien des problèmes et des solutions qui méritent encore examen.

Les notes de critique textuelle ressemblent à celles que l'on trouve dans la *BHS*. On signale à l'occasion le profit qu'on peut tirer des anciennes versions, spécialement celle de la Septante, ainsi que des fragments trouvés à Qumrân, par exemple à propos de Dt 31,1. Toutefois, il faut reconnaître que ce recours est peu fréquent et qu'il se contente d'«améliorer» le texte hébreu au besoin. De fait, les anciennes versions ne sont pas étudiées pour elles-mêmes. Pour le Deutéronome, cela ne porte pas à conséquence grave, mais des différences existent tout de même entre la tradition massorétique et la tradition attestée par la Septante (un cas typique: celui du cantique de Moïse, ainsi que de son cadre, aux ch. 31-32).

En critique littéraire, Nielsen note assez régulièrement la distinction des «passages en tu» et des «passages en vous». On n'a pas l'impression qu'il

y attache tellement d'importance pour la distribution des textes, vu que la base est peu fiable (il le note d'ailleurs clairement), mais le besoin d'y revenir indique une préoccupation de sa part, commandée sans doute par sa fidélité à signaler les contributions de Hölscher et de Steuernagel (voir par exemple Dt 4,1-8; 7,1-6 et 12,1-28).

Si les deux sections sur la critique littéraire classique et sur l'histoire des traditions et de la rédaction fournissent un excellent état de la question, on ne peut en dire autant de la partie concernant l'étude des structures (et de la forme du texte). On peut indiquer que cette troisième partie du commentaire aurait avantage à être développée, tout en étant établie sur des bases plus solides que celles indiquées ici. Les études de Lohfink et de Braulik, entre autres, auraient pu servir comme point de départ d'une telle analyse de structure.

Traiter du décalogue (Dt 5,6-21) et de sa présentation littéraire en huit pages peut paraître court, même si l'exposé sur la forme ou structure du décalogue est sans doute le plus détaillé du volume. Vu l'importance du sujet, cela nous laisse sur notre faim, mais les principales études anciennes et moins anciennes sont notées, ce qui nous permet de continuer à étudier la question si nous le voulons. La même remarque vaut pour plusieurs autres passages, par exemple pour la loi de centralisation du culte en Dt 12 (voir, à propos du v. 5, l'étude des trois formules employées dans ce ch. 12).

Dans l'étude des lois, Nielsen refuse trop rapidement de considérer l'existence possible de petits catalogues de lois. Il se contente de regroupements par association de mots ou d'idées. Cela laissera insatisfait quiconque a essayé d'expliquer le contexte de ces lois et leur origine (sans oublier la comparaison avec les lois de l'ancienne Mésopotamie).

Comparée à la section traitant du code de lois, en Dt 12-25, l'appendice liturgique et le rituel contenant malédictions et bénédictions ont davantage retenu l'attention de l'A., me semble-t-il. L'approche y paraît souligner à bon droit l'aspect communautaire, rituel et liturgique, ce qui devrait permettre un bon examen et une bonne discussion de la question. Par ailleurs, l'A. aurait dû étudier le cadre général du Deutéronome, ainsi que le contexte fourni par ce long discours de Moïse, pour examiner ce que signifie cette «répétition» ou, mieux, ce «renouvellement de l'alliance» au pays de Moab, au moment où se fait la catéchèse ultime avant le passage du Jourdain pour entrer dans la terre où coule le lait et le miel. Ainsi, ces «paroles de Moïse» qui sont ses dernières paroles, son «testament», souligneraient davantage en quoi tout fait sens en ce dernier jour, car bénédictions et malédictions accompagneront la communauté d'Israël au cours de l'histoire pour lui rappeler l'enseignement de Moïse et la Loi.

Si la bénédiction de Moïse, au ch. 33, reçoit un commentaire fort apprécié, on doit noter que le bref ch. 34 se termine sur un commentaire très court. Aucune synthèse ne vient s'ajouter en conclusion du volume.

On regrette que ce commentaire, si riche, ne soit pourvu d'aucunes des tables qu'on est en droit d'attendre dans un tel type d'ouvrage. Après tout, c'est là un manuel et on attend d'un manuel qu'il puisse être consulté facilement. On corrigera aisément la douzaine d'erreurs typographiques qu'on

trouve aux p. 53, 68, 116, 148, 151, 231, 255, 298. On peut croire qu'aux p. 171 et 147, c'est l'ordinateur qui a joué de mauvais tours!

En somme, voilà un commentaire qui a mis du temps à mûrir, un ouvrage qui porte la trace du temps et qui témoigne d'une méthode qui prête le flanc à la critique, mais dont la richesse reste incontestable. Ses notes de lecture, ses références aux exégètes qui, concrètement, représentent l'étude du Deutéronome depuis un siècle, nous permettent de ne pas oublier que l'exégèse se construit à partir de l'expérience et des essais de nos devanciers. On risque de ne pas faire mieux si on ignore ce qui s'est fait auparavant.

223 Main Street  
Ottawa, Ont. K1S 1C3 Canada

LÉO LABERGE, O.M.I.

Rolf RENDTORFF, *Die 'Bundesformel': Eine exegetisch-theologische Untersuchung* (SBS 160). Stuttgart, Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995. 104 p. 13,5 × 21. DM 39,80

L'auteur introduit son étude par une citation de Ne 9,6-8. Dans ce passage qui s'inspire de Gn 15 et 17 apparaît le verbe «choisir» caractéristique de la théologie deutéronomiste, ce qui montre comment des traditions théologiques qu'on a l'habitude de traiter séparément peuvent fusionner. Ceci amène l'A. à faire une déclaration de principe méthodologique (12-16) où il plaide en faveur d'une lecture synchronique des textes dans leur forme définitive: «La tâche de l'exégète consiste à comprendre et expliquer le texte dans la forme où il nous est présenté actuellement, sa forme ultime, canonique» (15). Il reproche à une certaine exégèse historico-critique de n'utiliser le texte que comme un matériau pour reconstituer l'histoire d'Israël et de son environnement, au lieu de dégager le sens du texte lui-même. Un reproche analogue est fait à la *Formgeschichte*, celui d'avoir poussé à une étude de concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*) traités isolément, alors que dans le texte biblique ils sont presque toujours associés à d'autres. Ainsi, même si le verbe «choisir» n'est appliqué à Abraham dans aucun texte antérieur à Ne 9, peut-on dire que l'idée d'un choix d'Abraham par Dieu n'existe pas dans les traditions rassemblées en Gn 12-36?

L'A. définit ensuite l'objet de son étude: la formule d'alliance (*Bundesformel*), acceptant la dénomination proposée par R. Smend, *Die Bundesformel* (ThST 68; Zürich 1963). Smend distingue trois types de formules: A: «Je serai Dieu pour eux/vous»; B: «vous serez un peuple pour moi»; C: «Je serai Dieu pour vous et vous, vous serez pour moi un peuple». Les versions A et B ne sont pas à considérer comme des fragments de C, mais comme des expressions autonomes. Un tableau (94) donne l'inventaire des occurrences retenues par l'A.: 9 de A, 8 de B et 18 de C.

Après avoir étudié et commenté chaque occurrence de la formule, l'A. les traite dans leur contexte large, par ensembles littéraires. Ces ensembles sont: le Pentateuque sacerdotal (au sens de la *Kompositionsschicht* de E. Blum), le Deutéronome, l'histoire deutéronomiste et les prophètes (Jérémie et Ézéchiël, plus Za 8,8). On remarque que l'écrit sacerdotal préfère la ver-

sion A; le Deutéronome et l'histoire deutéronomiste préférèrent la version B et les prophètes, la version C. Mais cette dernière figure aussi en Ex 6,7; Lv 26,12; Dt 29,12; 2 S 7,24. L'A. examine le cas de Dt 26,17-19 où l'on a successivement A puis B, mais bien séparés: on ne peut donc dire que ce soit une occurrence de la formule C, encore moins la source de cette version (29-30). De plus, c'est le peuple qui prononce la deuxième formule, ce qui fait de ce texte un cas tout à fait exceptionnel. C'est aussi le seul cas où la formule concerne une *berît* réciproque. Mais ceci n'implique pas que ce texte soit plus ancien que les autres.

Dans la troisième section du livre, les textes sont repris dans leur contexte large. L'A. recense les thèmes auxquels la formule est associée: *berît*, libération d'Égypte, choix d'Israël, obéissance à la Loi, habitation de YHWH au milieu de son peuple. On note surtout qu'elle est souvent associée aux formules «Je suis YHWH» et «vous saurez que je suis YHWH». Enfin, elle figure dans tous les schémas de la «nouvelle alliance».

Dans la quatrième section, ce champ d'étude s'élargit encore et prend en compte les dimensions historiques des ensembles littéraires. Mais ce n'est pas pour essayer de construire une histoire de la formule. L'A. note que cette formule impose une vision unitaire et achronique de la notion de *berît*, puisqu'elle s'applique à la promesse à Abraham aussi bien qu'à la nouvelle alliance espérée au-delà de l'exil. On peut remarquer aussi qu'à l'exception de 2 S 7 elle n'est pas mentionnée dans des textes concernant la période monarchique (81-82). Les rapprochements souvent évoqués entre Dt 26,17-19 et 2 R 23,3 sont trop ténus pour fonder une hypothèse sur les circonstances de la première apparition de la formule.

On retiendra donc qu'au stade final de la composition des textes bibliques régnait la conception d'une *berît* unique, exprimée diversement suivant les contextes historiques, mais décrivant la même relation entre YHWH et son peuple. Le livre n'aura pas d'autre conclusion que celle-ci: la formule «apporte une contribution substantielle à l'extension et à la différenciation du champ thématique qu'on peut désigner brièvement par théologie de l'alliance» (93). R. Rendtorff contribue lui-même à l'élaboration de cette théologie d'une manière très intéressante. Cependant, puisque l'A. indique d'entrée de jeu les limites dans lesquelles son étude voulait se tenir, il laisse ouvert un vaste champ de recherches, par exemple sur les formules apparentées à la formule d'alliance telle qu'elle a été définie ici.

La bibliographie compte 69 titres: 58 en allemand, 9 en anglais et 2 en français. On peut y remarquer l'absence des études sur l'alliance des années soixante (Baltzer, McCarthy, Beyerlin, etc.) qui étaient déjà devenues des «classiques».

BP. 1095 Brazzaville  
Congo

Pierre BUIS

Simon J. DE VRIES, *From Old Revelation to New. A Tradition-Historical and Redaction-Critical Study of Temporal Transitions in Prophetic Predictions*. Grand Rapids, MI, W.B. Eerdmans, 1995. xxiv-383 p. 16 × 23,5. \$29.99

The author is well-known for his earlier study of biblical designatives of time and the theology of history which ensues therefrom (*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Times and History in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI 1975]. According to the Preface of the present work, however, he is not fully satisfied with the third part, in particular, of his former work which deals with "Day Future". The present volume offers an in-depth analysis of Israel's way of speaking about future time, as it comes to the fore in the literary procedures which governed the expansion of prophetic foretelling, and the ideology of the redactors of the prophetic books. It is assumed in this book that the growth of this corpus is mirrored by the technique of linking secondary material to earlier elements through the use of formulaic temporal transitions pointing to the future which stand, as a rule, at the head of the new material. Basic to the understanding of the present study is the distinction between "integral" futuristic formulas that appear organically within compositional units, and "transitional" futuristic formulas that introduce redactional supplements, attaching them as appendages to the underlying material. By analyzing those prophetic predictions that employ the latter type of introductory temporal expression, De Vries demonstrates how futuristic expectation was expanded and reshaped within the prophetic collection into an eventual canonical form. The phrases investigated are the following: "(and/so) now" (*w<sup>e</sup>attâ*), "then" (*'āz*), "(and it will happen) on that day / in those days" (*[w<sup>e</sup>hāyâ] bayyôm hahû' / bayyāmim hāhēm*), "at that time" (*bā'ēt hāhîr'*), "behold, days are coming" (*hinnēh yāmim bā'im*), "afterwards" (*'aḥar*), "later" (*'aḥârê-kēn*) and "in the sequel of days / years" (*b<sup>e</sup>'aḥrît hayyāmim / haššānîm*).

De Vries' interesting Introduction situates the present research *vis-à-vis* the work of his predecessors in the ideology of tradition history (von Rad, Carroll, Fishbane, Clements, and Munch). Part One linguistically and exegetically analyzes the distribution and use of the specific formulas mentioned above as temporal transitions. Part Two examines the role of passages which include these temporal transitions within the structures of the respective prophetic books. Part Three studies the place of such passages within a process of multi-level redaction, the relationship between traditional imaging and innovative reinterpretation and the impulses that led to the creation of new revelation. In the process, clear distinctions emerge between a historically defined futurism, a spiritualizing eschatology, and an emergent apocalypticism.

The study as a whole is very instructive for scholars who have tended, up to the present, to neglect such idiomatic expressions (probably most of us). It is surprising to note the regularity with which these expressions govern the joining together of "primary" and "secondary" prophetic material, a regularity which is to be found both in the contextual redaction

of individual small units and in specific prophetic books as a whole. In contrast to many contemporary descriptive studies, the author has made a felicitous choice of exegetical method by not using exclusively formal criteria, e.g. syntactical structures in which these expressions occur, but also by accounting for the various ways in which the presumed expansions link up with the underlying material, e.g. whether and how the time-designatives are the result of semantic elements in the preceding context. One can only admire the careful and astute manner in which the analysis of the passages has been conducted. In addition, the method chosen leads the reader to a number of most helpful insights, such as the conclusion (41-43) that the expression *bayyôm hāhū* in futuristic passages creates either a synchronism with the event mentioned earlier (e.g. Ezek 38,14.19) or a consequence ensuing from it (Isa 22,20.25). This non-formal approach, however, also explains the vulnerability of the study's results.

In Part One ("The distribution and employment of futuristic transitions"), the specific texts are discussed in detail, utilizing available and pertinent studies which have a bearing on the meaning and function of the expressions concerned in each passage. This part of De Vries' study is basically descriptive and one is rarely inclined to disagree with the author's findings. Disagreement does occur, however, where the findings go beyond the function of the expressions concerned in their semantic context. This happens when the distinction between poetry and prose is applied as a preliminary step (47-51), or when the findings are based on source or redaction criticism. An example of this is the conclusion that the clauses "You will say on that day" in Isa 12,1 (sing.) and 4 (plur.) form a liturgical rubric rather than a redactional frame and link up with 11,1-9, in which case 11,10-16 would be of a later date than that of ch. 12 (43-44). At this point, the author is indebted to the classical opinion of H. Wildberger as expressed in his commentary. Recent studies have pointed to a "primary" redaction status of ch. 13 in clear association with 11,10-16; cf. P. R. Ackroyd, "Isaiah i-xii: Presentation of a Prophet", *Congress Volume Göttingen 1977* (ed. W. Zimmerli) (VTS 29; Leiden 1978) 16-48; J.-P. Sonnet, "« Tu diras ce jour-là » (Is 12,1)", *L'Écriture, âme de la théologie* (éds. R. Lafontaine et al.) (IET 9; Bruxelles 1990) 173-180; H.-P. Mathys, *Dichter und Beter. Theologen aus spätalttestamentlicher Zeit* (OBO 132; Freiburg-Göttingen 1994) 188-201; H. G. M. Williamson, "Isaiah xi 11-16 and the Redaction of Isaiah i-xii", *Congress Volume Paris 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton) (VTS 61; Leiden 1995) 343-357; id., *The Book Called Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford 1994) 118-125.

In Part Two ("Futuristic transition in the growth of the prophetic books"), the author's point of view about prophetic redaction criticism naturally comes more to the fore. All the chapters which deal with individual prophetic books begin with sections concerning: 1. "redaction and ideology" and 2. "the present state of research". One cannot but be impressed by De Vries' extensive knowledge, his ability to synthesize vast amounts of material and to incorporate the questions found therein into his own research. At the same time, however, the sections under discussion

necessarily reflect the opinions of the scholarly community at the time this research was being done. Since the opinions of commentators evolve so rapidly, it is frequently the case that De Vries' redaction historical sketch has already been surpassed. A good example is the case of the book of Isaiah, in which De Vries maintains a point of view which has prevailed for the last hundred years, i.e. that the three larger blocks of the book existed as separate literary entities for a significant period of time before being integrated into one book. Given that exegetes currently tend to focus on one redaction of the entire book of Isaiah which had a significant impact on the interdependent organisation of the prophetic oracles and their presentation in three blocks, the classification of "introductory transitions in Isaiah" found in the present work (118-124) is due for revision. Likewise, the reconstruction of the redactional growth of Isa 1-39 as proposed by H. Wildberger in his commentary cannot, in spite of all its thoroughness, be considered the final word in exegetical scholarship. In saying this I do not intend to suggest that Wildberger's treatment of the book of Isaiah has been superseded. De Vries' proposal that integral transitions in the first part of the book indicate a sequence of events whereas introductory transitions involve a synchronic relation between events (124-126) may require some modification in the aftermath of a more complex redaction history, although it remains a well-founded explanation for a surprising, yet completely neglected semantic phenomenon. This conclusion is all the more important in that it bears upon the very concept of the day of YHWH in the book of Isaiah "as a comprehensive event with numerous and various effects, in which logic did not always prevail as the vision moved from one event to another event within the proximate future" (125). Moreover, the very fundamental question as to the significance of the lack of introductory temporal transitions in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah (126-129) is serious enough to be addressed by precisely those who adhere to the new hypothesis of an overall redaction which had a profound impact on the wording of all the prophetic material. The same problem of how De Vries' understanding of the redaction history of the prophetic books influences his description of the function of the temporal transition arises in any discussion of the other prophets (Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets).

In Part Three ("Futuristic transitions in the traditioning [*sic*] process"), De Vries undertakes the very arduous task of describing the redactional history of the prophetic books by situating the special group of predictive passages with temporal transitions — integral or introductory — in the entire process of secondary expansion within the Scriptures. In other words, he does not attempt to reach the "big bang" of prophecy by trying to distinguish the original words of the prophets from their own or their disciples' subsequent recording thereof. His interest does not focus on the oral or first literary stages of the tradition process but on what happened to "primary material" (which may have gone through its own process of coming into being) from the moment it was expanded by additions which included introductory temporal transitions. He hopes that by adjusting the telescope to focus on this specific distance in the prophetic universe the



development of its creative literary composition can be traced as far as, but not including, the final procedures of editing, i.e. later glosses and canonical arrangement.

In order to achieve this end, De Vries embarks on a chapter about "distribution according to redactional levels" in which he offers an *a priori* matrix: I. Initial shaping and recording. II. Preliminary collocation and reshaping. III. The shaping of major complexes. IV. Pre-editorial supplementation. This situational scheme is roughly equivalent to a chronological order of pre-exilic and post-exilic, including both early and late occurrences within each category. In my opinion, the very enterprise of assigning the passages which have temporal transitions to these six levels (239-269) is an extremely difficult task for which a great deal of hermeneutical courage is required. While the author must remain open to criticism here, not only with regard to individual passages but to the entire enterprise as whole, this does not mean that the endeavour as such should not therefore be discarded. His classification of the texts is made on solid ground. The present reviewer could find no evidence for rejecting the proposed listing, although in a number of places another way of assigning passages seemed to be equally possible on the basis of similarly sound arguments. The chapter which follows deals with "themes in futuristic imaging" and attempts to draw conclusions from the material presented in the previous chapter. The themes are arranged in the three categories which result from Part One and Part Two: primary and secondary predictions with integral transitions, and secondary predictions with introductory transition. Within each category an inventory is proposed according to "pattern of tradition development" and "imagery". The inventory itself is useful but the distinction between "patterns" and "imagery" lacks theoretical background, as does the classification of historical, symbolic, spiritual and cosmic images. It remains open to question whether the very concept of imagery allows for this sort of listing, given that imagery as such is a multi-layered semantic phenomenon. The last chapter ("The tradition of expanding revelation") deals with the technique of editorial expansion (with or without catchwords or phrases), the ideology of expansion with temporal connectives and, finally, with the special role of predictions with introductory temporal transition. It is in this third section that we encounter the author's deeper interest. The technique of expanding primary prophetic oracles by means of temporal transitions served the transmitters' conviction that YHWH's activity in history "could in principle be extended from the past to the present and from the present to an immanent future, a proximate future, and a more remote future" (325). In this way, the final pages offer a sketch of Israel's dynamic understanding of revelation which is apparently also the author's incentive for the present study. De Vries' conclusions are to be seen as a well-founded proposal, open to further modifications. He has enriched the field with a paradigm which facilitates our understanding of the prophetic tradition history. Its value lies in the fact that it synthesizes a large number of exegetical studies made over a period extending to the

present day. New forms of research will recognize it as a book of lasting value.

Waversebaan 220  
B - 3001 Leuven-Heverlee

Willem A. M. BEUKEN

### Novum Testamentum

Samuel BYRSKOG, *Jesus the Only Teacher. Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Matthean Community* (ConBNT 24). Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994. 501 p. 15,5 × 23. SEK 188,—

L'intention de cette dissertation défendue à l'Université de Lund est simple. Très tôt, les Pères (Ignace d'Antioche, Clément d'Alexandrie) parlent de Jésus «seul maître»; la formule elle-même se trouve en Mt 23,8. L'auteur veut établir une relation entre la compréhension de Jésus comme seul maître et la transmission de la tradition de Jésus dans la communauté matthéenne (14). Il étudie donc le lien entre la confession christologique et le mode de communication du savoir. Pour ce faire, la première partie de l'ouvrage analyse comment l'enseignement était transmis en Israël et dans le judaïsme ancien; la seconde partie s'attache au premier évangile. Les deux parties sont construites de façon symétrique, puisqu'elles posent les mêmes questions à la littérature juive et à l'évangile de Matthieu.

Une introduction méthodologique (13-31) propose les modèles heuristiques, fixe le métalangage et situe l'étude dans la recherche actuelle. Cette thèse a aussi un mérite peu courant: l'auteur est capable de faire dialoguer la recherche anglophone avec la recherche allemande, et il n'oublie pas les travaux en langue française. Soixante-six pages de bibliographie témoignent de l'impressionnante information de Byrskog: il a (presque) tout lu sur le sujet!

Son travail prend position sur la controverse entre la *Formgeschichte*, pour qui la formulation de la tradition synoptique est due à la créativité de la chrétienté postpascale (Bultmann, Dibelius), et l'école scandinave. À partir des travaux de H. Riesenfeld et surtout de B. Gerhardsson (*Memory and Manuscript* [Uppsala 1961]), cette école défend l'idée d'un processus de transmission didactique initié par Jésus et perpétué par ses disciples. R. Riesner (*Jesus als Lehrer* [Tübingen 1981]) a confirmé ces thèses, faisant remonter la pratique didactique de Jésus à des modèles plus anciens que l'académie rabbinique (Gerhardsson). Riesner montrait que la constitution de la tradition de Jésus ne se réduisait pas aux intérêts de la communauté, mais répondait aussi à un intérêt biographique et historique. Bref, l'école scandinave reproche à la *Formgeschichte* de confondre l'acte délibéré de transmission didactique, qui présuppose un milieu sociologique repérable, et la création d'une tradition dont rien n'exclut qu'elle remonte à l'enseignement de Jésus. Pour elle, c'est la tradition didactique de Jésus qui

préexiste à la multiplicité des lieux de transmission dans la chrétienté post-pascale, et non l'inverse.

La thèse de Byrskog adopte les positions de l'école scandinave. L'auteur entend renforcer les résultats de Riesner en faisant le pont entre la christologie et le processus de transmission didactique. Le postulat méthodologique est que: «the transmission of material concerning words and deeds of an esteemed person exhibits features that are not as evident in the transmission of material concerned with impersonal matters» (21). Une tradition placée sous l'autorité d'une personnalité forte va donc porter des marques d'identité (*identity markers*) qui la rattachent à son initiateur. Autrement dit, en-deçà des marques sociologiques qui signalent le façonnement de la tradition de Jésus dans la communauté primitive (*Formgeschichte*), Byrskog recherche les marques d'identité renvoyant au fondateur de cette tradition, le Maître de Nazareth. Dès lors, il cherche à démontrer que la compréhension de Jésus en tant qu'enseignant non seulement habite la tradition de Jésus, mais qu'elle en gouverne la transmission. Le choix du premier évangile s'imposait du fait de l'importance qu'il accorde à la christologie du «maître».

D'un point de vue heuristique, l'auteur élabore trois modèles de transmission didactique qu'il va appliquer au milieu vétérotestamentaire juif et à la tradition matthéenne (22-23): (1) le modèle didactique, où l'enseignement est indépendant de la vie du maître; (2) le modèle didactico-biographique, où l'enseignement est intégré à la vie du maître; (3) le modèle de l'«étiquetage didactique» (*didactic-labelling*), où l'enseignement souligne l'autorité exclusive du maître au moyen de marques de validation.

La première partie de l'ouvrage (33-196) analyse le rapport entre autorité didactique et transmission didactique dans l'Israël et le judaïsme anciens.

Le chapitre 1 s'interroge sur l'autorité didactique et les lieux de transmission. Est-il possible d'identifier une relation maître-élève parmi les divers lieux de communication du savoir en Israël? On peut déceler un phénomène d'école autour des prophètes tardifs (Ésaïe, Jérémie, Ézéchiël et leurs successeurs); mais le contexte socio-culturel d'une communication scolaire, comportant une formation de scribes, se vérifie plus nettement à propos de Jésus ben Sira et des ses «fils», de Qumrân (dont les textes confèrent au Maître de Justice une forte «identité didactique»), et bien entendu dans la pratique des rabbis.

Le chapitre 2 applique les modèles de transmission didactique aux divers champs de la recherche. Le modèle didactique est présent chez Jésus ben Sira (la transmission vise l'enseignement, non la relation au maître) et dans le rabbinisme (on n'est pas élève d'un rabbi, mais disciple de la Torah). Les écoles prophétiques, qui véhiculent des épisodes biographiques de leur maître, se rattachent au modèle didactique-biographique. Seul Qumrân répond au modèle de l'«étiquetage didactique», dans la mesure où la participation au groupe implique la ratification d'une autorité charismatique et messianique reconnue au leader fondateur (CD 6,7; 7,18-19). Byrskog utilise aussi les catégories sociologiques de Max Weber.

Ensuite, l'auteur recherche les «marques d'identité» qui unissent l'autorité didactique au processus de transmission. L'enseignement des rabbis

est placé sous le nom des maîtres. Selon l'auteur, il faut en chercher la raison dans le processus de constitution d'une Torah orale, et pas seulement écrite, car l'oralité implique un lien interactif entre l'élève et le maître. La transmission acquiert de ce fait un caractère préservatif: il s'agit de conserver « toute la Torah », dont l'autorité remonte à Moïse. Il n'en va pas de même pour la tradition prophétique où confluent la littéralité et l'oralité: on n'hésite pas à ranger des matériaux neufs sous l'autorité d'un prophète (cf. 2 et 3 Ésaïe), si bien que l'on intègre de nouveaux apports au matériau ancien. La tradition acquiert par là un double caractère d'ouverture et de fermeture. À Qumrân, toutefois, l'enseignement du maître ne lui est pas attribué nommément, « for whatever reason » (155). Le processus de transmission à Qumrân doit avoir été géré par une école de scribes de la communauté sans l'apport de l'oralité propre aux écoles prophétiques (d'où l'auteur tient-il cela?). À cette stricte préservation de l'enseignement correspond l'idéalisation de la figure du Maître de Justice et sa qualification messianique.

Résultat: les trois lieux de la scolarité attestent qu'un lien substantiel existe entre la tradition et le nom du maître; même dans le cas d'attributions secondaires, l'identification fonde l'autorité de la tradition en l'enracinant dans le passé. Ces trois modèles constituent l'arrière-fond culturel de Matthieu, sans qu'il soit possible de déterminer a priori lequel a pu exercer l'influence majeure.

La seconde partie du livre (197-398) est consacrée au premier évangile. Elle se structure comme la première (lieu - modèles - processus de transmission).

Dans le chapitre 4, l'auteur confirme quelques données de l'exégèse matthéenne, à savoir que l'évangile déploie une christologie du « maître » et que les disciples sont décrits comme des élèves de Jésus. Une première partie étudie les termes didactiques (*didaskalos*, *didaskein*, *didachē*). Une seconde trace le portrait des *mathētai* matthéens, figures paradigmatiques des croyants. L'identification proposée au lecteur de Mt l'introduit *ipso facto* dans une relation maître-disciple. Cependant, l'école dans laquelle il est introduit « was not the school of Matthew. It was essentially the school of Jesus » (236).

Le chapitre suivant montre que les trois modèles didactiques identifiés plus haut sont repérables dans l'évangile. (1) Le type didactique se reconnaît à la préparation des disciples pour une mission de scribes enseignants (8,19; 13,52; 23,34; 28,19-20) et à la valeur permanente reconnue à l'enseignement de Jésus. Pierre (16,19) se voit attribuer une autorité didactique fondatrice et c'est par sa médiation que les disciples demeurent fidèles à l'enseignement de Jésus. (2) Le type didactique-biographique est présent puisque l'activité enseignante du Jésus matthéen est intégrée dans la trame de l'évangile. (3) L'« étiquetage didactique » se reconnaît à l'*exousia* du « maître » (21,23-27; 28,18), à l'usage des titres *rabbi* et *kathēgētēs* (23,7-10; 26,25.49) et à l'activité du maître de la Torah (voir 5,21-48 et la christologie de la sagesse).

L'auteur dégage finalement le but de sa thèse: le lien constitutif entre l'identification nominale des logia (leur attribution à Jésus) et le processus de

transmission. Il défend deux points de vue originaux: l'insistance de Mt sur l'orthopraxie dénote une exigence d'imitation de Jésus qui s'applique aussi à la tradition; le traitement auquel Mt soumet ses sources écrites (Mc, Q) témoigne d'un processus de ré-oralisation, qui subordonne l'écrit à la tradition orale. En résumé, Byrskog affirme que l'évangéliste accorde la priorité à la préservation et non à la réinterprétation créative. À la différence de la tradition prophétique qui incorpore des influences postérieures, le conservatisme matthéen exerce sur les paroles de Jésus un effet régulateur et protecteur.

Ce monument d'érudition se situe au cœur d'un débat complexe qui, malgré d'évidentes qualités pédagogiques, reste d'un abord difficile. Le mérite de l'ouvrage réside dans la maîtrise de plusieurs disciplines qui permettent à l'auteur de dresser une typologie éclairante des modèles de transmission didactique dans la littérature juive et judéo-chrétienne.

À notre avis, les positions de l'école scandinave sont plutôt illustrées que discutées. On souscrira au correctif apporté à la liberté sans frein que la *Formgeschichte* prête à l'évolution de la tradition. La transmission des logia de Jésus est assurément à comprendre au sein d'une tension entre conservation et actualisation.

Mais le pôle de l'actualisation demeure obscur et Byrskog n'éclaire qu'une part de la réalité. Car une tradition, dans la mesure où elle est reconnue normative et vivante, ne doit-elle pas s'adapter aux conditions des nouveaux récipiendaires? Une transmission orale (voir la «ré-oralisation» matthéenne) est-elle plus fiable que l'écrit? La tradition narrative, qui demeure en dehors du champ d'analyse, montre à quel point la liberté interprétative des premiers chrétiens a été puissante. Les paraboles évangéliques et les paraboles rabbiniques appartiennent à deux conceptions opposées de la transmission scolaire. Assurément, le traitement des logia ne peut pas être assimilé à celui du donné narratif. Ce dernier n'a pas été marqué par des mesures préservatives aussi contraignantes que le trésor des logia. Mais si, selon Byrskog, les récits matthéens de miracles constituent un «visual teaching» (274), alors la liberté du rédacteur dans la formulation de cet enseignement-là devrait donner à penser.

On relèvera aussi que l'auteur reprend et exploite la thèse énoncée à Uppsala par K. Stendhal sur l'existence d'une école matthéenne (1954). Byrskog la prolonge de manière instructive en construisant un parallèle entre l'école de scribes qumrâniens et l'école de scribes matthéens. Mais cette comparaison achoppe sur un point crucial: en effet le Maître de Justice demeure anonyme. Le lien entre l'attribution nominale d'un logion et la préservation de son libellé n'est pas attestée dans ce cas, alors qu'il est fondamental pour le premier évangile.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il faudra un jour discuter comment s'articulent les deux contraintes auxquelles fut soumise la tradition des paroles de Jésus: la préservation des paroles du maître et l'actualisation sous l'égide de l'Esprit. L'enjeu n'est pas que littéraire, il est théologique: il y va de la définition du concept de fidélité. Toutefois, l'argumentation de cette thèse érudite est remarquable d'intelligence.

Otto SCHWANKL, *Licht und Finsternis. Ein metaphorisches Paradigma in den johanneischen Schriften* (Herders Biblische Studien 5). Freiburg–Basel–Wien–Barcelona–Rom–New York, Verlag Herder, 1995. XVI-440 p. 16 × 25,5. DM 88–Sfr 86–ÖS 687,—

Diese Studie ist eine von Prof. Dr. Hans-Josef Klauck angeregte, von der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Würzburg im Jahr 1994 angenommene, für den Druck leicht überarbeitete Habilitationsschrift. Sie bietet in Teil A Sprachtheorie, in Teil B Textauslegungen, in Teil C Perspektiven; dies alles zu der Ausgangsbasis, dem Begriffspaar 'Licht und Finsternis' im johanneischen Schrifttum. Es ist ja eine seit langem bekannte, aber nie wirklich untersuchte Eigenart ausschließlich des johanneischen Schrifttums im Neuen Testament (75-78), daß dieses Begriffspaar roten Faden und Leitmetapher des Evangeliums darstellt. Hinsichtlich der Methodologie hält sich Schwankl "grundsätzlich für mehrere Ansätze offen" (6), bevorzugt aber recht ausschließlich den sprachwissenschaftlichen und den historisch-kritischen Zugriff. Auf der religionsgeschichtlichen Fragestellung liegt im Gegensatz zu der älteren Forschung, sofern sie sich dem Begriffspaar 'Licht und Finsternis' zugewandt hat, kein spezifisches Gewicht. Die ausschließliche Fixierung auf mögliche Ableitungen könnte den Blick für die theologische Zielsetzung, wie Johannes das Begriffspaar einsetzt, verbauen (359). Schwankl erkennt "Einflüsse eines verbreiteten Zeitgeistes" (358), denen Johannes nicht einfach ausgeliefert ist, die er vielmehr bewußt in einer "*missionarische(n) Großtat*" (74) in sein Werk aufnimmt.

Der Einsatz mit "Sprachtheorie" (Teil A) ist Programm: «Unser spezifischer Standort und Ansatz in dieser Arbeit ist also ein sprachtheoretischer" (8). Die Aufgabe einer theologischen Sprachtherapie bestehe einerseits in der Konzeption einer Therapie gegen den Schmerz der Endlichkeit (prinzipielles Sprachdefizit). Das Therapeutikum liege in der Metapher und der Metaphorik bereit, welche die "Selbstheilungskräfte der Sprache stimulierte", indem die Enge des Sprachraums erweitert werde (11). Das binäre Prinzip, von dem Johannes "extrem Gebrauch" (17) macht, erstellt andererseits ein Grundprinzip der Weltordnung und damit der Sprache, es "liefert eine elementare Ordnung für den Aufbau einer sprachlichen Sinnwelt" (17). Beide Aspekte stellt Schwankl sprachgewandt und im Urteil abgewogen dar. Der Leser wird durch Hinweise auf den empirischen, epistemologischen, linguistischen und religiösen Aspekt (38-73) bereits überzeugend zu der Einsicht geführt, daß die durchgehende Verwendung des binären Prinzips in der Metapher 'Licht und Finsternis' im johanneischen Schrifttum von fundamentaltheologischer Bedeutung ist. Dies allerdings wird Teil C (Perspektiven) in der Verknüpfung von Sprachtheorie und Textauslegungen ausführlich darlegen. Möglich ist diese Sicht aufgrund von Schwankls Bestimmung der Metapher als einer Reflexion einer allgemein-menschlichen Sinneswahrnehmung — dies im Gegenüber zu der oft kritisierten Beliebigkeit und Relativität der Metapher: "Die verlässlichste und plausibelste Basis verständlicher, fester, 'ubiquitärer' oder 'archetypischer' Metaphern ist das empirische Bezugssystem, die allen Menschen gemeinsame leibhaftige Sinneserfahrung" (35). Innerhalb der religiösen Sprache nimmt das

Licht, "soweit es dafür überhaupt eine Entsprechung gibt, im empirischen Raum jene Spitzenstellung ein, die Gott im religiösen Universum zukommt" (52). Aus den sprachtheoretischen Überlegungen ergibt sich für die Exegese der Einzeltexte die Frage, "wie die Metaphorik von Licht und Finsternis an der jeweiligen Stelle gestaltet wird; wie sie 'funktioniert', mit welchen Größen die Begriffe Licht und Finsternis metaphorisch 'zusammengespannt' werden und welche Bedeutung sie dabei übernehmen" (79). Schwankl spricht sich also entschieden für ein semiotisches Konzept aus: von der Grammatik zur Semantik, von der Ausdrucksweise zur Bedeutung des jeweiligen Textes.

Die ausführlichen Textauslegungen der johanneischen Licht-Finsternis-Aussagen (Joh 1,4-5; 1,7-9; 3,19-21; 8,12; 9,5; 11,9-10; 12,35-36; 12,46; 1 Joh 1,5-7; 2,7-11) stellen vom Umfang her das Schwergewicht des Buches dar (74-329). Einige wenige, aber wesentliche exegetische Entscheidungen sind hier festzuhalten. In Joh 1,1-5 zieht Schwankl V.3c (ὃ γέγονεν) zu V.4 und übersetzt: "was geworden ist, war in ihm Leben" (84), er betont die präsensische Zeitform der etymologischen Figur φῶς... φαίνει, und übersetzt κατέλαβεν mit 'überwältigen' (94). Dies läßt ihn in V.5 die "Gesamtbotschaft des Evangeliums in einer lichtmetaphorischen Zusammenfassung" (392) lesen. Bereits Joh 1,5 sei inkarnatorisch zu verstehen (94), da Johannes das reale Schicksal Jesu vor Augen habe, wenngleich letztlich die Finsternis das Licht nicht überwältigt habe. Dies sei zugleich auf die gegenwärtige Situation des johanneischen Kreises zu beziehen, da die Präsensform φαίνει die bleibende Gegenwart Jesu bei den Seinen anspreche (111). Der Leser des Evangeliums erkenne in V.4-5 freilich zunächst noch nicht mehr als einen metaphorischen Sprachmodus, nämlich Begriffe wie Licht, Finsternis, Leben, die ihm einen Tummelplatz der Assoziationen eröffnen. Es bleibe ihm überlassen, in diese Sätze bereits jetzt oder an späterer Stelle des Evangeliums ein Christusbekenntnis einzutragen.

Bei Joh 1,9c bezieht Schwankl das Partizip ἐρχόμενον auf das Licht: 'Es war das wahre Licht, das erleuchtet jeden Menschen, kommend in die Welt'. Dieses Kommen ist zeitlich nicht fixiert, ebenso ist der Kosmos nicht eindeutig bestimmt. "Die Welt wird jedenfalls nicht von vornherein verworfen oder verteufelt, und 'Entweltlichung' macht sich Johannes nicht zum Programm" (138).

Die Licht-Metaphorik wird in Joh 8,12 der Christologie eindeutig dienstbar gemacht, ohne daß die Lichtmetapher hierbei die ihr eigenen "weitreichenden Potenzen und Konnotationen" verliert (219). Allerdings wird die Lichtmetapher durch die Bindung an die Person Jesu historisiert und personalisiert, im Darstellungsgang des Evangelisten wird der Weg von der impliziten zur expliziten Christologie beschritten. Joh 8,12 wird im Gesamt-evangelium "der Dreh- und Angelpunkt, die Wurzelmetapher der Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik" (219). "Im Ich-bin-Wort 8,12 kondensiert und konzentriert Johannes gleichsam seine Offenbarungstheologie in einer festen *Formel*" (221-222). Schwankl verbindet diese Ausführungen mit weitreichenden Folgerungen. Da der Begriff Licht im jüdisch-hellenistischen Umkreis des Joh bereits ein weit verbreiteter Titel bzw. ein Prinzip gewesen

sei, trete "Jesus in Konkurrenz zu allen anderen Größen ..., die vor und neben ihm diesen Titel tragen" (210).

Die Lichtmetaphorik des 1 Joh unterscheidet sich in vielfacher Hinsicht von derjenigen des Evangeliums. Der Brief, der zeitlich dem Evangelium nachgeordnet wird — "gewissermaßen als 'Beipackzettel' ..., der einem Mißbrauch des joh Grundstoffes wehren ... soll" (283) — setzt das in 1 Joh 2,18-19 angesprochene Schisma innerhalb des joh Kreises voraus. In dieser Situation bezieht sich der Autor des Briefs auf den sozialen und ethischen Aspekt der Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik. "Eine 'pure', rein 'vertikale' Liebe zu Gott ist ein Phantom, das 'karitative' Seitenstück zu einer a-karnatorischen, monophysitischen Christologie" (323). Die Licht-Metaphorik ist im Brief Gott, nicht wie im Evangelium Jesus zugeordnet.

Aus den vielfältigen Perspektiven (Teil C) soll hier referiert werden, was Schwankl unter johanneischem Symbolismus und Inkulturation versteht. Der johanneische Symbolismus, verdichtet in Begriffen wie Licht, Wasser, Brot, Finsternis, Leben, Wein, basiert auf einem 'symbolischen Prinzip', dem Logos, in dem Gott aus sich heraustritt und die ganze Schöpfung am Wesen des Logos zugleich partizipiert. Es besteht daher eine prinzipiell symbolische Struktur des Geschaffenen, so daß Johannes die großen Symbole seiner Umwelt auf Jesus, das Ursymbol, hinordnen kann (365). "In der joh Lichtsymbolik begegnen sich eine weit verbreitete Religiosität und die besondere, an Jesus orientierte Glaubenserfahrung und treten in einen fruchtbaren Austausch" (369). In dieser Übernahme der Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik, für die kaum urchristliche, sondern im wesentlichen synkretistische Vorgaben bereit lagen, erkennt Schwankl ein hermeneutisches Paradigma. Ohne Berührungsängste übersetzt Johannes die christliche Botschaft in die Sprache seiner Zeit. "Die *Inkulturation* des Evangeliums erwächst aus der Fleischwerdung des Logos. Die joh Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik ist ein Paradigma solcher Inkulturation" (400), Johannes "eine Art urchristlicher Philo" (385), sein Evangelium mit "ausgesprochenem *ökumenischen Charakter*" (387), welches bereits vorwegnimmt, was Vaticanum II den nichtchristlichen Religionen gegenüber gefordert hat, nämlich *aestimatio* (387).

Die Anfragen an Schwankls Buch beziehen sich zunächst auf seine Darstellung des Evangelisten. So wie Schwankl es aufzeigt, kann Johannes nicht mehr als 'Exponent der Gemeinde' vorgestellt werden. Vielmehr erscheint Johannes als Schriftsteller, der in 1,7-9 hörbar den Auftakt des Markusevangeliums anklingen läßt (116), der "mit Bedacht auf gnostische Vorstellungen" eingeht (386), mit "gnostisierenden Begriffen und Vorstellungen arbeitet" (73), aber nie von Vorgaben abhängig wird, sondern sie im Evangelium, welches "eine hohe Affinität zur Form des Dramas" (350) hat, einsetzt. Ist dieses Bild des Schriftstellers möglich geworden, weil eben "*im Ganzen primär syntagmatisch und synchronisch*" (79) vorgegangen worden ist? Es fällt jedenfalls auf, daß diachrone Fragen der Johannesexegese mit Leichtigkeit hintangestellt oder offengelassen werden. Eine Entscheidung zur Existenz einer Semeia-Quelle etwa wird höchst unterschiedlich gegeben (187, 235, anders 223, Anm. 3); die Berücksichtigung neuerer Literatur wird hier vermißt. Auch wird die religionsgeschichtliche Frage



nach der Vorgeschichte der Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik nicht konsequent von den Texten her angegangen (50-73), die in diesem Abschnitt herangezogene Sekundärliteratur ist veraltet. So werden auch für die These des titularen Gebrauchs von  $\phi\omega\varsigma$  in der Umwelt des Neuen Testaments keine Belege, sondern nur Zitate aus der (überwiegend älteren) Sekundärliteratur genannt.

Desweiteren ist die Frage zu stellen, ob die hermeneutischen Konsequenzen, die um die Begriffe Inkulturation und Symbolismus kreisen, von der schmalen Ausgangsbasis der Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik her allein gezogen werden können, oder ob sie nicht einer breiteren Abstützung aus dem joh Schrifttum bedürfen. Schwankls Arbeit bestätigt so auf ihre Weise den Satz von P. Ricoeur, daß die Paraphrase der Metapher kein Ende hat und daß die Möglichkeiten ihrer Umschreibung unbegrenzt sind und zu immer neuen Interpretationen anregen.

Beide Anfragen beziehen sich letztlich auf Schwankls methodologische Voraussetzung der Sprachtheorie. Auch für denjenigen, der diese Voraussetzung so nicht teilt, muß dieses Buch einen Fortschritt in der Johannesexegese darstellen. Noch nie ist die Licht-Finsternis-Metaphorik im joh Schrifttum so eingehend und philologisch gründlich bearbeitet worden. Die von Schwankl gebotenen Perspektiven bieten zudem einen nicht zu umgehenden Beitrag für die Rekonstruktion der Theologie des Evangelisten.

Lotharstr. 65  
D - 47048 Duisburg

Friedrich Wilhelm HORN

Ben WITHERINGTON III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI, W.B. Eerdmans–Carlisle, UK, The Paternoster Press, 1995. XX-492 p. 16 × 23,5. \$34.99

The prolific pen and keyboard of Witherington have been used to good effect in this work, whose stated purpose is to examine the Corinthian letters from the standpoint of their composition as consciously modelled rhetorical literature. Employing the now familiar patterns of Graeco-Roman rhetorical art, the author decides that the category of deliberative rhetoric best describes the situation in 1 Corinthians, whereas as the pastoral and problematic situation degenerated prior to the writing of 2 Corinthians, Paul's recourse to forensic-judicial rhetoric techniques was called into play in that letter.

Yet this neat division of literary "types" is hardly adequate to explain the subtle interplay of rhetorical devices that run through both epistles. The result is that each chapter and even many sub-units within the periods are treated as *exempla* of Paul's literary and argumentative style, invention and device. The outcome is a virtual commentary on these two major Pauline letters from the perspective of the social-rhetorical discipline that the author believes throws needed light on many dark exegetical conundrums and problem topics and texts. In the main, one must confess this enterprise has largely succeeded. Students of Paul's dealings with Corinth as well as those

interested to see how this newer hermeneutical tool functions will find here much to stimulate reflection as well as proposals to challenge current thinking.

Given the nature of this work, it is difficult to offer more than an overall assessment. To enter into dialogue, both appreciatively and to express hesitation and caution, would necessitate a review almost of equal length as the book itself. The reviewer must confine himself, therefore, to some general observations, and just a few marginal comments on particular issues.

The structure of 1 Corinthians is stated as follows (237): Paul's rhetorical strategy opens with a discussion of features at Corinth that created divisions (ch. 1-4), founded on the debate over wisdom. Then follow some "boundary issues" where the church confronts the surrounding world (ch. 5-10). In turn, "in house" concerns as the church meets for worship and fellowship are then treated (ch. 11-16). Whether this is completely accurate or adequate may be questioned, since there are some obvious loose ends to be tied up within these broad categories. Where this treatment is helpful is to trace the ongoing flow of Pauline argument as the various topics evoke a correspondingly suitable rhetorical approach.

2 Corinthians yields to a similar analysis, with Paul's literary strategy moulded and shaped by the deterioration of relationships between apostle and congregation (made up of churches in several locations, Witherington rightly observes, 354) and the influence of "opponents" whose presence is registered throughout the (unified) letter with 2,17 serving as the *propositio* or hinge of Paul's defence and apologia. The letter is an exercise in the establishing of "proofs" (of genuine apostleship, as earlier scholars as E. Käsemann and H. D. Betz had argued in regard to ch. 10-13), conducted on the well-known lines of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. This arrangement looks convincing, especially when it is linked with the sub-units of rhetorical analysis (335-336); and incidentally a good case may be made for the literary unity of 2 Corinthians, including the often-regarded insertion of 6,14-7,1 which Witherington treats as *egressio*, as Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 4.3.12) defines it.

Both letters are aimed at securing one declared goal: reconciliation (a note the present reviewer in company with M. Mitchell on 1 Corinthians was pleased to see, 328, 351), with the various rhetorical strategies angled to secure the result of harmony among Paul's converts in Corinth (1 Corinthians) and reconciliation between Paul and his people (2 Corinthians). The defection from Paul's apostolate, visible in the time-gap between the two letters, is accounted for by the influence of false teachers, though with seeing them at work throughout the sequence of 2 Corinthians, this supposition downplays the evident allusion to their arrival on the scene in 11,4; and the leading issue between them and Paul identified in terms of the debate over client-patron relationship (354) does not do justice to the serious indictment of 11,13-15 with its allegations of "another Jesus", a different gospel and an alien spirit.

Several additional features make this book invaluable for a close inspection of the Corinthian letters, their setting and strategy. The author is

in constant dialogue with Pauline scholarship, especially where social studies of the Graeco-Roman world impinge and where the value of rhetorical criticism speaks to an elucidation of the Pauline text. The author is also aware of the theological dimensions of the debate between Paul and his congregations, with the opponents forming a third partner in the triangular relationship. Inevitably, however, given the author's focused interest, stated in the sub-title, the theological issues do not receive full treatment, though there are useful insights that observant students will appreciate as having a direct bearing on Paul's christology and ecclesiology as well as his claim to leadership role as God's "apostle" (the translation "agent", 79, is decidedly weak, and "ambassador", 354, is only a slight improvement). The pericope in 1 Corinthians 11,17-34 is more interested in the social settings of convivial meals in ancient Hellenistic culture than in Paul's teaching on the eucharist and the eschatological dimension of 11,26. See too 16,22 where the prayer-call *Maranatha* is only partly acknowledged as being situated in a eucharistic/table-fellowship setting (as in Didache 10,6, 323; the discussion on 159 is weak too *ad* 5,6-8). Similarly on a grander scale chapter 15 tends to get short shrift, largely swallowed up in the detailed, yet always interesting, study of Roman imperial eschatology. Still, no one writer can enfold all aspects of Paul's teaching in its milieu, and Witherington has elsewhere provided his thoughts on Paul's christology as well as a large-scale work on Paul's narrative theology.

Two items may now be singled out for extended comment, as matters on which the present reviewer would like to take issue. In 1 Corinthians (177) and again in 2 Corinthians (456) the author believes that the moral problems at Corinth have to be debited to the male members. The evidence for this conclusion looks to me to be weak and even tendentious. Even without the direct statements in 1 Corinthians 14,33-40, it still looks clear that women (prophets) were an occasion of some contention at Corinth; hence the extended discussions in ch. 7 and 11.

Paul's use of the Old Testament, which is surely a key factor in interpreting both epistles, inevitably tends to get sidelined in this book. One example that comes to the reviewer's attention is 2 Corinthians 6,14-7,1 with its clear indebtedness to a catena of Old Testament texts. One road to understand the specific function of Paul's appeal here is that of fixing social boundaries which need to take note of "entangling alliances" (406). Yet there is more to Paul's use of Old Testament categories as W.L. Webb in his *Returning Home: New Covenant and Second Exodus as the Context for 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1* (JSNTSS 85; Sheffield 1993) has demonstrated. The purpose of these citations, which are carefully chosen to enforce the point, is to show fulfillment of the promised new temple with Yahweh dwelling among his people and their being bound to him in covenant union, an objective that required their heed to the call, "Come out of Babylon!" Then Yahweh will receive them as they return to the homeland, and will acknowledge them as sons and daughters of Zion (Isa 43,6). Paul's role here in the epistolary framework is to enact the *'ebed* character, seen in his tender solicitude (6,11-13; 7,2-4) and his re-echoing the call for the Corinthians to leave their idolatry (6,14) and come back to God and to

himself as God's apostle (2 Cor 1,1). The often-regarded erratic boulder or "kind of meteorite fallen from the Qumran sky" (Benoit) is thereby shown to fit exactly into the sequence of Paul's kerygmatic and pastoral appeal to the still-disobedient Corinthians as he occupies a middle ground *in statu Christi* between God and the Corinthian rebels. To that degree the social-moral boundary markers are invested with a deeper theological-pastoral significance than rhetorical analysis will grant.

A pleasing aspect of this book is the author's recourse with some regularity to the pastoral concerns of the modern readers. Chapter headings are catchy and pointed. With some daring the tough-minded discussions of 1 Corinthians 7,1-40 ("Holy Wedlock and Unholy Deadlock"), 14,1-40 ("The Agony of the Ecstasy") and 15,1-58 ("Rising to the Occasion") are lightened by these snappy captions, though 11,2-16 misfires with "Heads Up". Anecdotal asides sometimes take up several pages (214-216, on whether clergy should be paid for their work) and at first glance resemble the "foreign body" that 2 Corinthians 6,14-7,1 is sometimes alleged to be. Yet often a serious note is sounded, still in the pastoral style (363, ministers should take stock of their pastoral priorities; 463-464, the discussion of Paul's "thorn in the flesh" = bad eyesight is turned to good effect, as is the case with some unanswered prayer today. But the question remains: Was Paul's prayer met with the answer, no! as the author boldly asserts, 461?)

Typographical, spelling and translation errors are few (note 75, 90, 108, 113, 115, 157, 283, 310, 380, 400, 404, 405, 460). The book's composition is evidently computer-generated, with a breakdown of codes displayed on page VIII.

Fuller Theological Seminary  
135 N. Oakland Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91182 USA

Ralph P. MARTIN

## Varia

Ephraim STERN, *Dor, Ruler of the Seas. Twelve Years of Excavations at the Israelite-Phoenician Harbor Town on the Carmel Coast.* Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society, 1994. 348 p. 17,5 × 24. \$36.00

In this book, Ephraim Stern presents the major results of the excavation work that was carried out at Tel Dor between 1980 and 1992. He tackles the seven areas of excavation, namely A-G, some of which were further subdivided, such as area B which was split into areas B1 and B2. The foreword, the list of illustrations, that of the colour plates, and the introduction are followed by the main body of the book which consists of ten chapters. These are followed by an epilogue, which is in turn followed by an appendix and a bibliography.

The mound of Tel Dor lies on the Carmel coast of Israel. Dor is its original Semitic name, whereas Doros and Dora are the Greek and Roman forms respectively. It was a very important harbour in antiquity, and the Greeks called it Doros in honour of Poseidon's son Doros, who was credited by them as the founder of the site (266). The numismatic evidence underscores the importance of Dor; indeed, during Trajan's time in the early second century AD this city was given many attributes such as "Holy Dora", "City of Refuge", "Autonomous City", and "Ruler of the Seas". This latter title is very rarely found in Palestine, and generally it appears on coins coming from cities in Asia Minor or important Phoenician cities such as Sidon and Tripolis (266); hence, its application to Dor shows the city's importance. Originally, Tel Dor had been virtually completely surrounded by the sea; in fact, in antiquity there was also a lagoon on the east side of the mound (78). Dor does not have two but three coves, and research in the third cove shows 'that it was not only an anchorage, but also a ship-building and launching site' (80). It is thus not surprising to learn that the original settlers of Dor had been the Canaanites who went there at the beginning of the second millennium BC (19) and that this city was also of the utmost importance for the Phoenicians who were their direct descendants in the first millennium BC; indeed, Dor was of an equal rank to the four main Phoenician cities of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Aradus as far as size and importance are concerned (21-22). Tel Dor is truly a multi-period site which was practically inhabited continually from the beginning of the second millennium BC until 235 AD when it seems to have been abandoned (264). It had witnessed all sorts of ethnic groups: the Canaanites, the Sikils (one group of the Sea Peoples), the Israelites, the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans had all ruled Dor. Moreover, after Tel Dor had been abandoned, a Christian basilica was erected at the foot of the mound in the south-eastern area during the first half of the fourth century AD. The ceramic evidence from this church shows that Byzantine Dor had been a major centre for Christian pilgrims who traversed the route which linked Anatolia and Syria to Egypt and North Africa. This Christian site was destroyed by the Islamic armies in the seventh century AD, and later the area was used as a cemetery from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries AD (320-322).

Ephraim Stern has disclosed the archaeological history of Dor in a book which is well structured on the whole and which is amply illustrated by photographs and drawings showing the various categories of material remains that were retrieved, including pottery, architecture, inscriptions, coins, and industrial installations. His book is replete with very interesting information. Thus, we learn that in the twelfth century BC the immense fortification system employed at Tel Dor makes it 'the strongest contemporary fortified city discovered in Palestine' (93). Stern correctly insists on the importance of the "Phoenician-Israelite" style of building walls which consisted of "piers of worked ashlar pillars with a fill of fieldstones between them" (109). This method of construction was still used in the Persian period (153), although at this time Dor also provides evidence for a method of constructing walls which was more common in the

Punic west rather than in the Levant; indeed, a large structure in area D1 shows that at Dor the Phoenician community was using "monolithic pillars rather than the usual built-up of pillars between the fieldstone fill" to build walls (161-162). At times, Stern provides the reader with results which can interest scholars working in different fields of the ancient Mediterranean world. Thus, for example, evidence from Persian period Dor shows that the Hippodamic plan of this site occurred in the sixth century BC which is prior to the birth of Hippodamus of Miletus himself who was born in the fifth century BC, and that therefore "it appears that Hippodamus developed his system of town-planning from existing cities, of which Dor may have been one" (159-160).

It is a pity, however, that Stern seems to have written his book on Dor in a hurry for there are some weak points in it which he could have easily avoided had he mulled a bit longer over his work. Some weaknesses concern the structure of the book, whereas others are related to style and convention. There are some, however, which deal directly with the content at hand.

Thus, for example, the reader has to reach page seventy-one before he learns that the book is dedicated to the memory of H. Neil Richardson of Boston University. The plans do not always show the northern compass point; see, for example, the plan on p. 114. There are times when the reader is presented with a contradiction. So, for example, the word *northeastern* (paragraph 1, p. 51) contradicts some of the evidence presented in figure twenty (48); the plan shown in this figure indicates that we should read the word *northwestern* rather than *northeastern*. At other times he is faced with statements which are too general. So we read that the Egyptian conquest of Palestine lasted from 1500 BC to 1200 BC (19). But what about the Egyptian presence in some Palestinian sites, such as Beth Shean, after 1200 BC?

There are even some factual and/or terminological mistakes in Stern's book. The statement (71) that Pritchard had dug at Tel Deir 'Alla is not true (see G. van der Kooij, "Deir 'Alla, Tell", *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 1 [ed. E. Stern] [Jerusalem 1993] 338-342), whereas to define rhytons as "animal shaped drinking horns" (302) is not precise because a rhyton need not necessarily be in the shape of an animal (see *Collins Dictionary of Archaeology* [ed. P. Bahn] [Glasgow 1992] 427; in fact, Stern himself indicates this (303). Moreover, there is a confusion as far as the term *cardo* goes. Stern views the *cardo* as the main street in a Roman town that lies on the east-west axis (277, 279). However, in reality, this was the function of the *decumanus*. The *cardo* was quite different: it was the main street running on the north-south axis, and though it was not always necessarily oriented precisely due north it did always run in this general direction (see A. and M. Calderini, *Dizionario di Antichità Greche e Romane* [Milano 1960] 31, 251, 680). Even the Sea Peoples are defined imprecisely. We read about "a few sherds that are attributable to the Sea Peoples, i.e., the Philistines" (94). Now it is a commonplace that the Philistines are but one single component of the Sea Peoples.

The attitude of treating matters in too cursory a manner is also reflected in one very moot question in Palestinian archaeology. With

regards to Stratum IVA at Megiddo, amongst other things Stern also mentions "two large complexes of stables, capable of housing about 450 horses" (115). There is no discussion or at least mention of the fact that the structures referred to could not be stables at all (see B. Routledge, *PEQ* 127 [1995] 41-49).

It is disappointing to see that Stern does not have one single note or bibliographic reference in his book. Indeed, he does not even give a precise reference when quoting other authors at length. Thus, for example, the reader finds no precise reference to the long quotations from Amiran's (110) or Avigad's (123) work. The Bibliography at the end of the book can in no way be a substitute for the absence of bibliographic references. Moreover, the book also lacks an index, which would have been extremely useful.

Notwithstanding the points mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, Stern's book on Dor is still very informative and interesting. He has provided fellow archaeologists and historians of ancient Palestine with data which are most welcome. However, it would have all been even much more worthwhile had he spent some more time polishing the script of and providing references to the many interesting statements he makes.

Bellevue Court, Flat 7  
Reggie Miller Street  
Gzira GZR05 – Malta

Anthony J. FREND

Luigi CAGNI (a cura) di, *Le profezie di Mari* (Testi del Vicino Oriente Antico 2,2). Brescia, Paideia, 1995. 126 p. 13,5 × 21. Lit. 22.000

The present volume by the professor of Assyriology at the Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples is of considerable interest to biblical scholars too. It offers a careful translation of almost all the new Mari texts that mention prophetic phenomena, together with a new translation of all the previously known texts. Up to 1988 twenty-six or twenty-seven such texts were known; after the publication of J.-M. Durand, *Archives épistolaires de Mari*, I/1 (Archives royales de Mari, XXVI; Paris 1988) [henceforward AEM I/1], the number of texts increased to around fifty (in Cagni's collection there fifty-two prophetic texts: fifty letters and two accounts of prophetic dreams). There is no comparable publication in English or German as yet.

Students of biblical prophecy will find their use of the volume greatly facilitated by the detailed introduction (9-40). Cagni gives a valuable list of bibliographical indications for each individual text (12-13). The bulk of the introduction consists of a careful synthesis of Mari prophecy (17-37), which includes various references to biblical data. To this is added a brief survey of prophetic phenomena in other areas of the ancient Near East (37-40): one notes that Ebla is not mentioned here, neither is Emar (which is more surprising). An appendix to the introduction (41-49) gives a useful

schematic outline of the fifty-two prophetic texts under the following headings: place of revelation, divinities mentioned, content, and prophetic personages or class-names.

Cagni's annotated translation of the fifty-two texts takes up about half the volume (53-106); no transliteration of the cuneiform originals is given (in accord with the norms of the series). In this part the notes are exclusively Assyriological without any biblical references. Generally Cagni follows the philological options of J.-M. Durand in AEM I/1; occasional differences are justified in each case (cf. e.g. 55, n. 3 [1°]; 71, n. 3; 87, n. 1; 97-98, n. 8). This part of the volume, of course, can only be evaluated by other Assyriologists.

The end-matter of the volume includes a select bibliography up to 1989 (107-113), and three indexes (names of persons and population-groups; names of divinities; geographical names). There is no index of biblical texts, nor of significant Akkadian words apart from proper names; a general subject-index is not given either. The latter three lists would probably have enhanced the usability of the volume.

As mentioned above, Cagni's work gives us an almost complete corpus of the Mari texts that could, in one way or another, be termed prophetic. Prescinding from problems of definition (precisely what criteria must be verified before a text can be termed prophetic?), one can note that a few "prophetic" texts have been published after AEM I/1 (and are therefore not included in Cagni's collection). For some discussion of these (and other) texts one can consult the following articles: M. Anbar, "Mari and the Origin of Prophecy", *kinattūtu ša dārāti. Raphael Kutscher Memorial Volume* (eds. A. F. Fainey et al.) ('Tel Aviv' Occasional Publications 1; Tel Aviv 1993) 1-5 (espec. 3-5); A. Malamat, "New Light from Mari (ARM XXVI) on Biblical Prophecy (III-IV)", *Storia e tradizioni di Israele. Scritti in onore di J. Alberto Soggin* (a cura di D. Garrone-F. Israele) (Brescia 1991) 185-190; id., "The Secret Council and Prophetic Involvement in Mari and Israel", *Prophezie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel* (FS. S. Herrmann; [Hrsg. R. Liwak-S. Wagner] Stuttgart 1991) 231-236; id., "A New Prophetic Message from Aleppo and its Biblical Counterpart", *Understanding Poets and Prophets. Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson* (ed. A. G. Auld) (JSOTSS 152; Sheffield 1993) 236-241.

Biblical scholars will notice a few inaccuracies about Israelite prophecy in Cagni's introduction. For example, the statement that Eldad and Medad were female prophets (17). And it is not only the historiographical "minimalists" who will be surprised to find in a work dated 1995 the thesis that Israelite prophecy goes back to a Patriarchal period, which is presented as a historical category and whose beginnings are set in the 19th/18th cent. BCE (40). Readers can easily prescind, however, from flaws such as these, since they do not affect the essential contribution of the work.

One of the most interesting novelties in the recently published texts is found in Cagni's text 26, line 7, which mentions "the prophets [plural of *nabûm*] of the Ḫanaeans" (a West Semitic tribal federation in the kingdom of Mari) (81; see also 22-23). Since this term (clearly cognate with the



Hebrew *nābîʿ*) occurs only here in the Mari texts, it is not possible to say whether it was specific to the semi-nomadic group in question or whether it could also have been used with reference to prophets belonging to the sedentary population.

Another fascinating novelty is the description of a drastic prophetic action in text 16 (71-72): an ecstatic (*muhhûm*) devours a live lamb in public. This was meant to symbolize an imminent epidemic (Akk. *ukultum* "devouring" [i.e. by the god]) that threatened the population. It is interesting to note that this is not an absolute announcement of a future disaster; measures are indicated by the ecstatic, which, if followed, will ward off the epidemic.

Though the term "sign" is not used in the text just mentioned, there are several other texts that speak of a prophetic "sign" (*ittum*: text 1) and of "those responsible for the holy signs" (Cagni's rendering in texts 17 and 22, both published before 1988). The Akkadian term for the latter group (comprising both males and females) is the plural *ittātum*. One recalls that the cognate Hebrew term *'ôṭ* is occasionally used for persons in prophetic contexts (see a plural usage at Isa 8,18). For further discussion see Cagni 21-22, 25, and (differently) A. Malamat, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford 1989) 90-91.

Students of biblical prophecy will find many other interesting details in the present work, which can be warmly recommended as the most convenient source for the Mari data presently available in any language.

Via Aurelia 476  
I-00165 Roma

Charles CONROY

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ISSN 0006-0887

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PIETRO BOCCACCIO, Direttore Responsabile

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Autorizz. Tribunale di Roma n. 6229 del 24-3-1958 del Reg. della Stampa

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Finito di stampare il 20 dicembre 1996  
 Tipografia Poliglotta della Pontificia Università Gregoriana  
 Piazza della Pilotta, 4 – 00187 Roma